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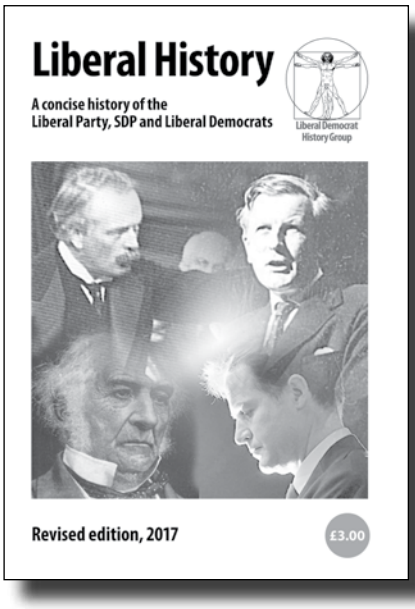

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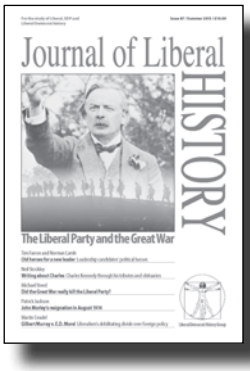

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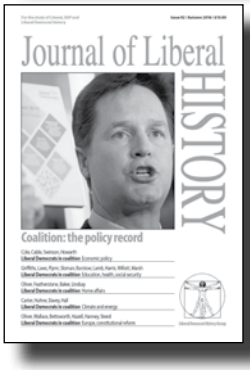

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April 2017

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Liberal Democrat History Group

The Liberal Democrat History Group promotes the discussion and research of topics relating to the histories of the Liberal Democrats, Liberal Party, and SDP, and of Liberalism. The Group organises discussion meetings and produces the *Journal of Liberal History* and other occasional publications.

For more information, including historical commentaries, details of publications, back issues of the *Journal*, and archive and other research resources, see: **www.liberalhistory.org.uk**.

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Liberal History News
Spring 2017

Major new resource for students of Liberal history

The Liberal Democrat History Group's website now features a major new resource for students of post-war Liberal history: a comprehensive directory of all election candidates at every Westminster election from 1945 to 2015.

This is the first comprehensive biographical index to appear of the individuals who have contested a UK parliamentary election under the designation Liberal, Liberal Democrat and Social Democrat, over the years 1945–2015. Separate files cover eleven English regions (Devon and Cornwall, East of England, East Midlands, Greater London, North East, North West, South Central, South East, South West, Yorkshire, West Midlands), and Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (Westminster elections only, including Alliance Party of Northern Ireland candidates).

A typical entry includes details of birth and death, where known, education school/college/university), career(s), elected local government offices held (though periods of service are often imprecise), party offices held, noteworthy distinctions/achievements, honours, publications etc, etc. Information on previous (or subsequent) activities with respect to other political parties is often included. Spouses and family often receive notice. Entries vary in length and presentation, reflecting the scale of the contribution which an individual made to the party and political life in the region or nationally, to parliament or his/her achievements in wider spheres of activity. Opinions expressed with regard to some of the more colourful personalities listed are those generally held.

Other directories have appeared listing candidates of all parties, election by election, though usually with scant biographical detail. Inevitably many entries in this series of regional indices, despite exhaustive research over twenty years, are incomplete and/or contain errors of identification etc. Many entries, particularly with respect to the many 'paper candidates' fielded in 2015, are woefully thin. Hopefully this series of indices will provide information useful to historians, scholars and for party members, will serve to revive memories of colleagues and personalities of yesteryear. Furthermore, it has been compiled partly as a tribute to the hundreds of individuals

On This Day . . .

Every day the History Group's website, Facebook page and Twitter feed carry an item of Liberal history news from the past. Below we reprint three. To see them regularly, look at **www.liberalhistory.org.uk** or **www.facebook.com/LibDemHistoryGroup** or follow us at: **LibHistoryToday**.

March

3 March 1988: Launch of the Social and Liberal Democrats, the result of the merger of the Liberal Party and the Social Democratic Party. The new party would later be renamed the Liberal Democrats. Accounts of the merger negotiations reveal that agreeing the name of the merged party was a very difficult part of the process. The new party's name was officially shortened to Democrats though some, less well disposed to the party, abbreviated it to 'Salads'. In either case it proved unpopular. The party was subsequently renamed Liberal Democrats in 1989.

April

13 April 1890: David Lloyd George enters the Commons, winning the Caernarfon Boroughs by-election by just 19 votes. He would go on to become President of the Board of Trade under Campbell-Bannerman, Chancellor of the Exchequer under Asquith and Prime Minister, 1916–22. He led the Liberal Party from 1926 to 1931, overseeing a short-lived revival in the party's fortunes. A charismatic and mercurial figure, he led the country to victory in the First World War and helped introduce the ideas of Keynesian economics to British politics – but his rivalry with Asquth split the Liberal Party and contributed to its post-war eclipse by Labour.

May

27 May 1970: Birth of Tim Farron, Leader of the Liberal Democrats. Farron has been Liberal Democrat MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale since 2005, when he defeated senior Conservative Tim Collins. Farron served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Menzies Campbell when the latter led the party and later served as Home Affairs Spokesman. He resigned from the front bench in 2008 in protest at the party's abstention from a vote on the EU referendum but later returned as Environment spokesman. In 2010 he was elected Party President, serving two terms until 2014. Following the 2015 election and the resignation of Nick Clegg, Farron was elected to the party leadership, winning the contest with 56.5 per cent of the vote over North Norfolk MP Norman Lamb.

who felt committed enough to allow their names to go forward for nomination in the cause of Liberalism particularly during the long periods when the party's fortunes were in almost total eclipse.

The History Group would like to express its sincere thanks to the compiler of the directory, Lionel King, who was himself a parliamentary candidate (Kidderminster 1964, Sutton Coldfield 1970, Walsall South 1987).

Corrections and additional information from readers will be most welcome; please send emails to Lionel King on lionelking1964@btinternet.com. Research will be ongoing. New information will appear in updated editions of the regional indices, together with entries on new candidates in parliamentary elections and by-elections which occur after May 2015.

Election song

Music has always been used at general election rallies and during election broadcasts; but in former days songs were often written specifically for an election or even a particular candidate. The approach of the election on 8 June 2017 gives us the opportunity to reprint an election song written for Lord Hartington, Liberal candidate for North Lancashire in the 1868 general election.

Plump, Boys, Plump!
(Tune: 'Tramp, Tramp, Tramp')

Electors, shout for joy,
And return the Lib'ral boy
And drive the Tory bigots far away,
LORD HARTINGTON's the man,
Then return him, as you can,
For the Lib'ral boy is sure to win the day.

Chorus
Plump, boys, Plump, for truth and justice!
LORD HARTINGTON's a man of great renown;
Tell the Tories ev'ry one
That their race is nearly run.
They will have to 'Kick the bucket' very soon.

In that gallant ship Reform,
He will brave the Tory storm,
He fights with noble Gladstone and John Bright;
Struggles for the nation's weal,
With a heart as true as steel;
Come now, Plump, my boys, for justice and the right.
Chorus

Be Liberal, men, and brave,
And to no one be a slave,
Tell the Tories you've a will of your own;
Jolly farmers, all be true!
Snap their fingers at their 'screw',
For the Liberals can keep the Tories down.
Chorus

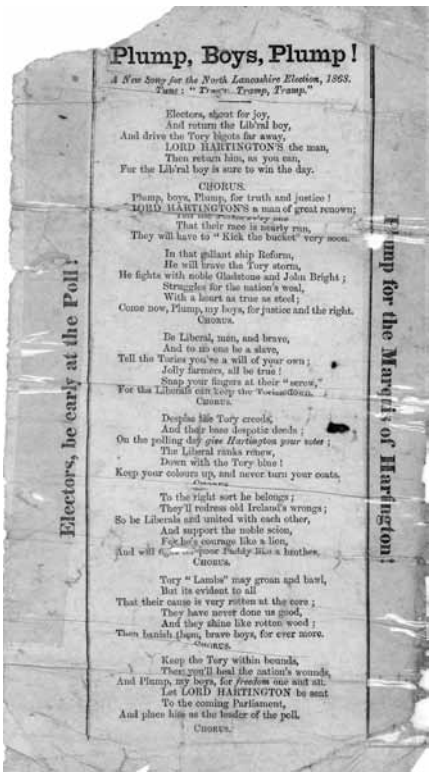
Despise the Tory creeds,
And their base despotic deeds;
On the polling day *give Hartington your votes*;
The Liberal ranks renew,
Down with the Tory blue!
Keep your colours up, and never turn your coats.
Chorus

To the right sort he belongs;
They'll redress old Ireland's wrongs;
So be Liberals and united with each other,
And support the noble scion,
For he's courage like a lion,
And will fight for poor Paddy like a brother.
Chorus

Tory 'Lambs' may groan and bawl,
But it's evident to all
That their cause is very rotten at the core;
They have never done us good,
And they shine like rotten wood;
Then banish them, brave boys, for ever more.
Chorus

Keep the Tory within bounds,
Then you'll heal the nation's wounds,
And Plump, my boys, for *freedom* one and all.
Let LORD HARTINGTON be sent
To the coming Parliament.
And place him as the leader of the poll.
Chorus

Spencer Compton Cavendish (1833–1908) was the eldest son of William Cavendish, later Duke of Devonshire; on his father inheriting the dukedom he took the courtesy title Marquess of Hartington. He was not a peer in his own right (until he succeeded his father as Duke of Devonshire in 1891) and was thus able to sit in the Commons. First elected for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A New Song for the North Lancashire Election, 1868.

Tune: "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp."

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To the coming Parliament,
And place him as the leader of the poll.
CHORUS.

Electors, be early at the Poll!

Plump for the Marquis of Hartington!

North Lancashire in 1857, he entered the cabinet in 1866.

In April 1868 Hartington supported Gladstone's resolutions for the disestablishment of the Irish church. This policy, unpopular in Lancashire (note the references to Ireland in the song), cost him his seat at the December general election. Three months later, however, he was elected for Radnor Boroughs.

He went on to lead the Liberal Party in the House of Commons during Gladstone's first retirement (1876–80). In 1886 he split from the party over Irish Home Rule, and led the breakaway Liberal Unionists until 1904, serving in Conservative / Liberal Unionist cabinets from 1895 to 1903.

The tune was taken from the American songwriter George F. Root's 1864 song, *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, The Boys are Marching*. One of the most popular songs of the American Civil War, Root wrote both the words and the music to give hope to Union prisoners of war. (Root also wrote *The Battle Cry of Freedom*. A patriotic song advocating the causes of Unionism and abolitionism, it became so popular that Southern lyricists adapted it for the Confederacy.) The same tune was later used by Liberals for the song *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp upon Protection*.

Thanks to Mr L. G. Calvert, of Poole, who sent the clipping, which appears to be from an election leaflet, to Liberal Democrat HQ.

Biography and archive sources

David Dutton uses a previously neglected collection of papers to trace the life and political career of the Liberal MP Sir Walter Runciman (1847–1937)

Sir Walter Runciman and the Runci

Sir Walter Runciman, 1st Baron Runciman (1847 – 1937)

The emergence of a hitherto neglected collection of private papers relating to a Liberal politician active in the first decades of the twentieth century is a matter of some note. In the case of Sir Walter Runciman, first Baron Runciman of Shoreston, however, it is not just the papers but the man himself who has so far been overlooked. Chris Cook's generally comprehensive and invaluable two-volume work, *Sources in British Political History 1900–1951: A Guide to the Private Papers of Members of Parliament*, not only failed to trace any papers relating to Runciman, but even omitted to list his name among those who sat in the House of Commons in this period.[1] At one level, this omission is scarcely surprising. Sir Walter's political career was not one of particular distinction. References to him are easily confused with those to his more famous son of the same name.[2] Furthermore, Runciman senior served as an MP for only four years and he never took part in a contested parliamentary election. There is no record that he spoke in the Commons chamber during his time as an MP. Runciman was elevated to a barony in 1933, but he was by then in his late eighties and was not active in the affairs of the upper house during the remaining four years of his life.

The Times obituary of the historian, Steven Runciman, offered a succinct summary of his grandfather's career. He was 'a Geordie of Scots descent who ran away to sea at 11, was a master mariner by 21 and founded a shipping line'.[3] If nothing else, this brief précis captures the extraordinary rise of a man who was born in Dunbar, East Lothian, in July 1847. The family soon moved to a very ordinary eighteenth-century stone cottage, provided by the Coast Guard service, in the fishing village of Cresswell, in Northumberland. As he later recalled, it was from this dwelling that, after one aborted attempt to escape the family's poverty, the young Runciman 'set out alone about 3 o'clock one dark December morning to follow my destiny, which led me through many adventures on sea and land. … I gently opened the door and slipped out, made my way to the beach, and

man Papers at Elshieshields Tower

commenced my journey to the nearest seaport.'[4] His formal education ended at this point, leaving him 'a mere human splinter, with no better prospects than the opulence of poverty while I graduated in the forecastle into sailor manhood haunted all the time with infantile notions of reaching the dignity of the quarterdeck'.[5]

Beginning as a humble cabin boy, Runciman rose steadily through the merchant marine and, for twenty-six years, 'with very small respite between the voyages … sailed as boy and man, winter and summer, in hot climates and cold, in small sailing vessels, in a handsome clipper, and finally in steamships'.[6] In the autumn of 1884, however, he was advised on medical grounds to live ashore and he retired from active sea service. The following year he started in business as a shipowner in South Shields, purchasing as his first vessel, at scrap-metal prices, an old steamer that had been laid up for three years during a period of depression in the industry. His commercial acumen was immediately apparent and in 1889 the South Shields Shipping Company (soon renamed the Moor Line) was set up with capital of £150,000. By the time of the First World War, Runciman's firm owned forty steamers and he personally was a multi-millionaire and the owner of a 300-year-old mansion, Shoreston Hall. It was a success story which he found it difficult to explain, often reverting in his correspondence to notions of 'destiny' and divine providence. 'I have built', he reflected, 'out of nothing to begin with but the faculty of observing and inventing a very large and successful business in a short time, while men who have had office training have not been so successful. Therefore my system must be as good as other people's at any rate.'[7] But Runciman would not have been able to pen a manual of good business practice: 'I generally act upon a sort of instinct which I cannot explain and which can only be acquired by getting to understand the workings of the world generally.'[8] At all events, he never took his wealth for granted and remained financially cautious throughout his long life. 'Even now', he wrote in 1928, 'the struggle I had in early life haunts me like a ghost and makes me avoid risks.'[9]

Once settled in South Shields, Runciman began to make his mark in public life. In particular, as a Wesleyan Methodist and lay preacher, he became conspicuously involved in the temperance movement, in which his wife, Ann Margaret, was already active. But until the South African war, in which, perhaps surprisingly, he found himself on the Liberal Party's imperialist wing, Runciman took only a 'newspaper interest' in party politics.[10] Opposition to Joseph Chamberlain's tariff reform campaign brought a more active engagement. Chamberlain was a 'puller to pieces not a Constructor and the country will do well to get rid of him'.[11] Succeeding Samuel Storey as chairman of the Northern Liberal Federation, Runciman campaigned vigorously for Liberal candidates in Northumberland and Durham in the general election of 1906, at one point considering standing himself in Tynemouth. By this stage, however, his chief political interest lay in the furtherance by any means in his power of his son's political career. His own ambition was apparently 'satisfied' by the conferment of a baronetcy in 1906, showing that it was 'possible for a poor sailor lad to make much of his opportunities'.[12]

Walter Runciman junior had first been elected to the House of Commons for the two-member seat of Oldham in a by-election in 1899.[13] Narrowly losing his seat in the Khaki Election of 1900 to the Tory, Winston Churchill, he returned to parliament as MP for Dewsbury in 1902, holding the seat until 1918. At the formation of Campbell-Bannerman's government in December 1905, he immediately secured appointment to junior office and reached cabinet rank as president of the Board of Education in 1908. The elder Runciman's path to parliament was somewhat more bizarre. The seat of The Hartlepools, largely industrial and Nonconformist, might have appeared an ideal constituency for him. But, at the start of the twentieth century, it was firmly in the hands of Christopher Furness, himself the head of a shipping firm. Indeed, so apparently secure was Furness's grip that in 1909 *The Times* equated any attempt to dislodge him with 'fighting the Pope in Rome'.[14] Following the first general election of 1910, however, Furness was unseated for electoral malpractice, having transported a number of miners to the polls, an action judged intimidatory to his political opponents. Nonetheless, Furness's nephew, Stephen, 'inherited' the constituency, holding it until his untimely death in 1914, following his fall from a hotel window. It was in these unusual circumstances that Runciman was hurriedly chosen to succeed him.

As one of the most prominent Liberals in the North-east, and certainly the wealthiest, he was an obvious choice at a time when the attention of many younger men was understandably diverted to the developing war in Europe. A beneficiary

The emergence of a hitherto neglected collection of private papers relating to a Liberal politician active in the first decades of the twentieth century is a matter of some note. In the case of Sir Walter Runciman, first Baron Runciman of Shoreston, however, it is not just the papers but the man himself who has so far been overlooked.

of the parties' wartime electoral truce, Runciman was elected unopposed on 22 September. He retained the seat throughout the First World War, becoming associated with a group of Gladstonian Liberals, including his fellow shipowner, Richard Holt, MP for Hexham, who viewed with suspicion the increasing involvement of government in the national economy, which the war necessarily entailed.[15] This group was fundamentally 'anti-war' and, though the papers do not throw light on this matter, its activities may have caused some difficulties for the younger Runciman. Though the latter had misgivings over some of the collectivist tendencies of the wartime government and produced an intellectually cogent objection to the introduction of conscription, he remained a cabinet minister until the fall of Asquith's administration in December 1916 and cannot be placed in the anti-war camp frequented by his father. In 1918, 'after running to and fro between [The Hartlepools] and Morpeth', Sir Walter failed to be nominated for either and made no further attempt to return to the Commons.[16]

~

A large quantity of Runciman papers, relating primarily to Walter junior but including also material relevant to his wife, Hilda (MP for St Ives, 1928–9), and to his father, was handed over to the Robinson Library, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, in 1969, with additional deposits in 1974, 1984 and 1989. However, a significant volume of correspondence, relating primarily to Sir Walter Runciman, remained in the possession of his grandson, Steven Runciman. The latter purchased Elshieshields Tower, a border towerhouse near Lockerbie, in 1966. The papers in question remained there, stored in his old study within the sixteenth-century tower, after his death in November 2000. The most important component of this collection consists of correspondence between Sir Walter and his son, Walter junior, extending from the latter's time as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge until the former's death in 1937. The entirety of Sir Walter's side of this correspondence appears to have been retained at Elshieshields, but something like half of the letters written by his son were selected at an earlier date, for reasons no longer clear, for transfer to Newcastle. Much of the correspondence deals with purely family and business matters and would form a veritable treasure trove for anyone seeking to understand the rapid rise of a relatively humble Victorian family from almost total obscurity to financial and political prominence. Sir Walter's own letters do not always make for easy reading. His lack of a formal education is apparent, with clumsy sentence construction, erratic spelling – 'there' and 'their' are often confused – and punctuation seemingly regarded as an optional extra. To one letter he added the somewhat desperate postscript, 'Punctuate yourself. I haven't time.'[17] Many letters, particularly from his later life, take the form of extended travelogues, as Runciman took himself off on cruises aboard his beloved yacht, *Sunbeam*, accompanied with varying degrees of enthusiasm by family members and friends. But these papers also throw much light on the hitherto neglected political figure of Runciman senior, while adding significantly to our understanding of his son's life and the influences upon his outlook and development. The older Runciman lived long enough to witness and comment upon almost the entirety of his son's extensive political career, only the latter's celebrated mission to Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1938 and his brief and unsuccessful return to the cabinet (October 1938 – September 1939) occurring after the father's death. Finally, there are important insights to be gained relating to the wider fortunes of the Liberal Party. Both Runcimans were witnesses to and participants in the party's catastrophic decline, which took it over

Elshieshields Tower, Lochmaben, Lockerbie (http://www.elshieshields.co.uk)

the period covered from the status of a party of government to that of a minor political force of around twenty MPs.

Relations between father and son were close and largely harmonious, though Steven Runciman later suggested that, while Walter junior admired his father, he 'slightly resented' the latter's efforts to muscle in on his political successes and also disliked his 'cavalier' treatment of his mother.[18] What is certain is that both parents strove to shape their son's outlook on the world. Sir Walter advised his then 14-year-old son to 'keep out of the company of bad and thoughtless boys, attend to your Sunday School and YMCA, never relax your efforts in doing what is good and right' and, more worryingly, 'never choose a book for yourself, let your mother do so'.[19] The young Runciman who wrote home from Cambridge a few years later clearly revealed the impact of a devout but somewhat puritanical upbringing. (Steven spoke of his father being 'inspired with Nonconformist terrors by his very bigoted mother'.[20]) The freshman had 'definitely settled not to be anything else but a Methodist minister or something of that sort'. His 'aim in life' was 'to benefit others and leave the world better than when I entered it'.[21] His initial impressions of Cambridge were unfavourable. It was 'such a bad place. Undergrad drunks are not bad compared to some other matters; simply disgusting, abominably devilish. AWFUL.'[22] But there was little danger of this particular undergraduate going off the rails, as he consciously sought to restrict his circle of friends to fellow Wesleyans. An unauthorised theatre trip provoked parental disapproval and necessitated a lengthy explanation:

> Now you are very much mistaken if you think that I have made a step in the wrong direction. The whole thing depends on the object that took me there … I went of my own free will and with the simple object of seeing the thing for myself. I did not taste of the evil, as Mother says, I watched its progress … I did not in the very slightest go to enjoy it, I went from as pure a Christian motive as ever I had … If the evils of drink could *not* be seen *outside* a public-house, I would go to the public-house to see them; but it does not follow that I would drink some of their liquor … I went to see how other people poisoned themselves and I came away quite uncontaminated.[23]

This period saw both father and son adjusting to changes in their social standing, the result respectively of increasing affluence and higher education. For the father the issue at hand was a change of address. His words perhaps betray something of the attitude towards his wife of which Steven Runciman later complained:

> Your mother and I can't agree about where we should reside and [she] seems to wish her likes and not my comfort and desires should be considered. I cannot however allow what I conceive to be my best interests to be tampered with by anybody. Whatever I conceive to be for our common interest I will do, and nothing else … Your mother's idea of getting into agreeable society is a shadow and will never be really realised.[24]

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Runciman was sceptical about a move from South Shields to Newcastle, notwithstanding his wife's belief that it would offer 'more scope for social intercourse for us'. He had been warned that Newcastle was 'offensively cliquish and difficult to make social headway in'.[25] For Walter junior there was the more mundane issue of a dinner invitation. 'Don't think that I delight in dinner parties,' he reassured his mother. 'I only went to old Moore's to please him and let the other people see that I was not at all below them in social rank.'[26]

Runciman junior faced his Tripos examination with some apprehension. 'Many books are indeed the source of much weariness', he concluded, 'at any rate, that's how I feel today.'[27] He found it difficult to describe his feelings when the ordeal was over. ' "Tired" is not a sufficient word. Everything seems a kind of uneasy blank.'[28] In the event, he secured only a 'third' rather than the 'first' that has sometimes been suggested.[29] The succeeding May Week he found distasteful. 'It is a bad business. Cambridge becomes a zoo, a museum and a Brighton in one – an abominable abuse of the place.'[30] Notwithstanding his earlier musings over a career in the church, it was probably inevitable that he should enter the family business. Indeed, he seems to have had little say in the matter. 'I feel sure', wrote his father, 'the advice I give is the very best and logical you could get anywhere.' Having given the matter full consideration, the elder Runciman had 'decided that you should enter my office as soon as possible not for my sake so much as for your own, though I will be glad when I have an occasional rest'.[31]

Within two years the son had been made a partner. It was the occasion for more of the father's homespun advice:

> I have large hopes for the future and it will only be what we make it. So fix today your aims as high as you intend and would wish to attain. You have everything in your favour. Education, position, good associations and good earnest wishes for your future well being. Aim high and work hard is a very good ideal to fix in the mind… Fix on method and steady application, never leave undone for tomorrow what should be attended to today. Distribute your energy and it will grow. Don't be content with our present position.[32]

With these final words Runciman was thinking primarily of the expansion of the family's business

interests, but it was not long before he was also encouraging his son to broaden his horizons by embarking upon a political career. By the middle of the 1890s young Walter was being urged to look out for a suitable constituency. The papers throw little light on the son's first steps into the political arena, though it may be assumed that, at a time before the payment of MPs, the father's financial support was a critical factor. Surviving letters do contain accounts of some early successes in parliamentary debates, as well as young Walter's warning to his mother to expect defeat in Oldham in the general election of 1900: 'Churchill's "heroic" stories [of the Boer War] all have a sensational influence, so that you must look out for the worst.'[33]

The young MP's career really took off once the Liberal government was formed in December 1905 and consolidated by an overwhelming popular endorsement in the general election of the following month. Promoted to the cabinet in 1908, he was 'the youngest man who has ever been Minister for Education and I need not tell you how grateful I am at the confidence shown in me'.[34] But the son's progress was not without its problems for his father, as the older man found himself out of sympathy with the broad thrust of the government's economic policy. A cause such as women's suffrage, in the long nineteenth-century Liberal tradition of righting a political injustice, excited the older Runciman's wholehearted support:

> I think you will see a public declaration very shortly of my going over to the extreme section of women suffrage. I have been thinking about it for months and now I am convinced that had it been a man's agitation I would have been in the front of it. I think I have always leaned to the thought that women could not be kept outside the Franchise for long if they pursued the policy of proper agitation … So I must get alongside of them as soon as I can find it opportune. Don't be taken aback if you hear a voice from the Strangers Gallery calling out for Woman suffrage and waving a banner over the heads of its opponents![35]

Similarly, as a longstanding temperance campaigner, he praised the licensing bill of 1908. But, as a businessman and Gladstonian Liberal, Runciman was inherently suspicious of government interference in the market and a firm believer in low taxation. Thus, the previous year's Workmen's Compensation Act was 'the clumsiest piece of doctrinaire work that has ever come from the hands of incompetent workmen'.[36]

Runciman set out his creed in a letter to his son:

> Personally I disagree with the whole financial policy. It may be free trade finance but in my opinion it is neither sound financially nor politically, and grief will come of it. The commercial interests of the country have been alarmed and are sullenly waiting an opportunity of pronouncing their verdict … Not a single person of the whole community will benefit by this whirlwind and thousands of poor creatures will be made to suffer and it will fall most upon those who have a struggle always to find food for the mouths of themselves and their families.[37]

For all that, he ruled out the suggestion that he might leave the Liberal Party. 'I know whatever the Liberal party may do they aim at sane reform though it doesn't come off sometimes. Anyway it is the side we should be on even if they do lick the boots of the socialists.'[38] He was wary of the inter-party conference called to resolve the constitutional deadlock resulting from the Lords' rejection of Lloyd George's budget and hostile to the Chancellor's scathing attacks upon the Unionist peers. Yet the upper chamber's eventual submission to the parliament bill in the summer of 1911 filled him with contempt:

> What a silly childish farce the Lords have exhibited. They have shown that intolerant spirit of ascendancy is still there. Nothing will wipe it out. It has been their habit whenever they have been attacked for misdeeds too glaring to pass by to adopt a policy of whining heroism and then like all despots slink into servility lest further trouble come to them.[39]

There is only limited correspondence in the collection relating to the period of the First World War, the result no doubt of father and son, both now members of the House of Commons, being in less need of written communication. But an interesting letter from Sir Walter to his wife well captures the mood in much of the Liberal Party following Asquith's replacement as prime minister by Lloyd George in December 1916, while setting the tone of the Runciman family's attitude towards the latter over the following decade and a half:

> We are all trying to prevent the very appearance of depression with not much success. The air is charged with it and we live in the atmosphere of it. It is not altogether personal, it is national, everybody but the yellow press who has made the position together with a few willing accomplices … No coup could be brought about in the way it has without sowing seeds of bitter feeling. It could have been avoided but for the attitude of one man and his co-operators. The Party, i.e. the Liberal, met at the Reform Club y'day in large numbers … It was a magnificent example of loyalty to witness the whole of the members of the late Government ex[cept] George standing by their chief in his hour of infinite trial brought about mainly by the man he had been a benefactor to.[40]

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The aftermath of the Coupon Election of December 1918 found both father and son excluded from the House of Commons. The younger man declared that there was 'no immediate prospect' of his return to parliament, a development which would have 'to wait for some little time, I fear'.[41] But if it took until the general election of 1924 to see the resumption of Runciman junior's Commons career, this was not for want of trying in the intervening period. He stood unsuccessfully in Edinburgh South (1920), Berwick-upon-Tweed (1922) and Brighton (1923) before being returned for Swansea West. In this near-continuous saga of electioneering, his father provided significant financial backing, support on the public platform and reassurance that present failures indicated the greater glories that Providence reserved for the future. After his son's defeat at Berwick, Runciman wrote:

> It may be that some other use is to be made of you or some more certain and enduring conquest awaits. I sincerely hope you will in a few days forget what must have been a bitter disappointment after all the hard work you put into organising and fighting for the seat.[42]

When Walter was finally successful in Swansea, he reacted with words of which his father would have approved:

> The election results in my Edinburgh and Berwick battles seem to be Providential, for I could never have held these seats and to have sat in the last two Parliaments would have worn me out uselessly and compromised me as well.[43]

For all that, he ruled out the suggestion that he might leave the Liberal Party. 'I know whatever the Liberal party may do they aim at sane reform though it doesn't come off sometimes. Anyway it is the side we should be on even if they do lick the boots of the socialists.'

The son's remarks also reflect the unease with which both men viewed the evolution of British politics in the immediate post-war era. The experience of the continuing coalition government confirmed Sir Walter in his existing mistrust of and hostility towards its prime minister, David Lloyd George. By the beginning of 1921 he was arguing that '[Lloyd] Georgism will bring the country to a peril that has never previously been known'.[44] It was a 'national necessity' that his government should 'cease to carry on its policy of complete wreck of this and other countries'.[45] Yet, like many other 'Asquithians', Sir Walter despaired also of the leadership offered by Asquith himself. The Liberal leader was now but a pale shadow of the man who had dominated the party, and the country, before the First World War: 'Strange that Asquith does not make a point of having regular meetings of his late colleagues and present supporters. The party cannot be efficiently organised unless there is some kind of system.'[46] He clearly looked to his son, still without a seat in parliament, to do something about this situation. 'The country wants to be stirred and enlightened not lulled. I think you, [Sir John] Simon and Sir Donald [Maclean] should insist on this with as much support as you can get from others.'[47] After the 1922 general election Runciman offered it as his 'considered view' that it would be better if Asquith went to the Lords and 'a real inspiring Leader took his place'.[48]

Yet Asquith hung on. In any case, the obvious alternative to him, especially after the nominal reunion of the party's divided factions in 1923, was Lloyd George. But Runciman's attitude towards the latter did not change from that expressed the previous year:

> I cannot think it a safe or wise course to have LlG as Leader. He can only bring confusion and disaster in the end. We don't want harum scarum competition with the Socialist Party.[49]

The impasse in Liberal politics, and Lloyd George's increasing power within it, led Runciman, perhaps inevitably, to wonder whether the time had come to change his political home. Asquith's loss of his parliamentary seat (October 1924), subsequent elevation to the House of Lords (February 1925) and ultimate resignation of the party leadership (October 1926), by making Lloyd George's succession all but inevitable, only exacerbated matters. 'I am really very much inclined to leave the party', Runciman confessed to his son, 'and to go over [to the Conservatives]. [William Wedgwood] Benn is hobnobbing with Lloyd George and it really looks as though you are going to be left alone. I have no faith in any of them. Hence I lean towards severing my connection.' And, of course, what applied to the father should apply also to the son: 'You would be welcomed and treated better by the Conservatives than you have ever been by the Liberals.' But the younger Runciman, now in his mid-50s and a leading player in Liberal politics in his own right, was less subject to his father's 'advice' than had been the case in earlier years. Indeed, Sir Walter recognised that his own future political affiliation would be determined by his son's actions. 'If I remain longer it will only be on your account.'[50] In the event, though he did resign as chairman of the Northern Liberal Federation, he had to settle for the younger Runciman's leadership of the so-called 'Radical Group', formed in December 1924 and, in the wake of Asquith's final resignation, of the Liberal Council, effectively a party within the party designed to renounce Lloyd George's leadership.

Even so, Sir Walter had no time for the radical policies with which Lloyd George sought to revitalise the Liberal Party in the late 1920s. Indeed, he still felt resentful about much of the pre-war government's legislative programme, upon which Lloyd George was now trying to build:

> The country is bleeding with the wounds inflicted upon it by Liberal legislation and I don't care to be associated with them any longer. Trades disputes act, doles and other forms of

> taxation on trade, on land and sea which are numbrous [sic] are the work of windbags and not constructive legislators … No real national benefit will ever be derived by the men who have the silly reputation of being progressive.[51]

The response of this businessman to the general strike of 1926 and the continuing strike in the coalmines showed how far to the right within the Liberal spectrum he now stood:

> I don't think the Government are so much to blame except that they have shown too accommodating an attitude to the Leaders [of the strike]. If it is incumbent on a Government to deal with the question at all, it should be by telling them that in the interests of the nation as a whole they must resume work and if they refuse then it is their duty to bring others to work the mines and deal with Messrs [Herbert] Smith and [A.J.] Cook [President and secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain] as Mussolini would under similar circumstances … It is a strong man that is needed for a crisis like this.[52]

Nor was Runciman's attraction towards the Italian fascist dictator a passing whim, occasioned by the frustrations of Britain's industrial troubles. Eight years later, by which time his son had returned to office as president of the Board of Trade in the National Government, Sir Walter hoped that a meeting with Mussolini could be arranged. His son duly obliged:

> This morning the Italian Ambassador, Signor Grandi, was paying me a call and I told him that you are going to two or three Italian ports in 'Sunbeam' very soon. From one of these you will probably visit Rome and you want to pay a brief call on the Duce, for whom you have such a profound respect. The Italian Ambassador took note of the time of your probable visit.[53]

The audience took place less than a month later, with the younger Runciman's enthusiastic encouragement:

> I hope you saw the great man and amongst other things you were able to tell him how much I feel in sympathy with him … It would be a calamity for both nations if the volume of trade between us is allowed to shrink, or to be diverted into other channels.[54]

For the newly ennobled Baron Runciman it had been 'a great day' which 'finished up with a most interesting and decidedly impressive interview with the greatest human figure in Europe today whose forceful modesty is a strange fascinating power'.[55]

Little correspondence with third parties survives in what is essentially an intra-family collection, though there are a few interesting letters from Margot Asquith, written characteristically in pencil and with her trademark double or even triple underlining for emphasis. Sir Walter's first impressions of the eccentric Mrs Asquith had been extremely favourable: 'She is a most likeable person', he declared in 1920 after a meeting in which her forthcoming autobiography appears to have been the chief topic of conversation, 'perfectly frank and I think taking into consideration [Lloyd George's] characteristics much misjudged.' He could not recall ever having had such an entertaining and enjoyable hour's conversation with anyone else.[56] Margot did not relate easily to those of lowly birth. But it was in her interests to play up to Sir Walter. At a time when finance was a constant headache, he was one of the Liberal Party's principal donors. Information in Herbert Asquith's papers suggests that Runciman (£10,000) was the party's second largest contributor to Liberal expenses for the general election of 1922, exceeded only by Lord Cowdray (£12,000).[57] In an undated note to Sir Walter, Margot claimed to report a conversation with her husband who 'said to me the other day "We have 2 very fine Liberals, clever men and men of great character, if we had 10 more of these we cd sweep the country." He named you and Ld Cowdray.'[58]

Sir Walter may have been susceptible to this sort of flattery. But while helping to keep the Liberal Party financially afloat was, at least in the early 1920s, still acceptable, underwriting Margot's notorious extravagance was a step too far. Mrs Asquith showed plenty of gall, if rather less judgement. 'You have always been a very true and affectionate friend to me,' she wrote in November 1924,

> and now I am down and heart-sore, sleepless and sad I turn to you to ask you a real favour. You may say I'm a bore but for the moment I can think of no one else to turn to. I want to buy myself a little motor to drive myself about all over the country in. Henry's Rolls is too heavy for me and for £200 now the McKenna duties are off I can get perfection. It's rather cheek of me but I'm so ill with sorrow [presumably over her husband's defeat in the recent general election] that this is all I want for the moment.[59]

There is no indication that Runciman succumbed to these entreaties. Even so, the by then widowed Margot despatched a second 'begging letter' a decade later:

> You once said to me that you wd always help me if I were ever in trouble. Therefore I am in trouble today. The Duke of Bedford has raised all his rents here … My brother Jack Tennant … died while playing billiards 10 days ago, and with his death his annual allowance to me comes to an end. I am therefore very hard up … There is no reason why you should help me, but if you cd send me a small cheque to help me to pay for the

'I don't think the Government are so much to blame except that they have shown too accommodating an attitude to the Leaders [of the strike]. If it is incumbent on a Government to deal with the question at all, it should be by telling them that in the interests of the nation as a whole they must resume work …'

> Christmas holidays and my presents to old servants I wd be deeply grateful.[60]

At all events, as early as the mid-1920s, at the time of her husband's final withdrawal from the Liberal leadership, it clear that Sir Walter's view of the woman who was now Lady Oxford had markedly changed:

> I had the interview with Lady Oxford. She blurted out as soon as I got into the room, 'Walter can be Prime Minister whenever he likes but he and you must put a quarter of a million. He can be the Leader of the Liberal party. Speeches are no use, it is money that is wanted.' … She flung her arms and head about and reiterated that you could be the Leader of the party if you adopted her plan. I quietly replied, 'don't you think the proper procedure is for him to be asked?' She said, 'never. We will never bow our knee to him or anyone else.' But I said surely you don't suggest that he should ask the party to make him its Leader? … She is really a clever incompetent person without any sense of proportion. I had her cornered every time and she could only wriggle out of how you could become Leader if you were not asked.[61]

The son's response to this report was both to the point and reassuring:

> What you tell me about Margot is simply astounding: the woman is mad and (what matters more) she is libellous and mischievous. Anyhow you need have no fear – not a penny goes from me into any of their coffers.[62]

Runciman junior's enthusiasm for his Swansea seat was of short duration. Evidently finding a Welsh constituency too susceptible to the influence of Lloyd George, he had decided before the end of 1926 not to contest it again, having already been approached by the Liberal Association in St Ives, Cornwall, to stand there instead: 'although St Ives is at present held by a Tory, they all think I would win it'.[63] In the event, the appointment of the sitting Conservative member, J. A. Hawke, as a High Court judge early in 1928 created a vacancy and precipitated a by-election earlier than Runciman might have wished. In these circumstances an approach was made to his wife Hilda to stand as the Liberal candidate, though 'they made it clear that I was only to be regarded as a stop gap and was dutifully to retire to let W[alter] stand at the General Election'.[64] After a vigorous campaign in which she successfully withstood the claim in *Punch* that she was no more than the 'wifely warming pan', Hilda secured the seat with a majority of 763 over her Conservative opponent. This was a time of several by-election victories, suggesting a conspicuous Liberal revival, though Runciman viewed his wife's achievement primarily in terms of an advance for the anti-Lloyd George Liberal Council:

> The influence of that win affects not only the Liberal Party but the country. And it makes our position one of greater strength than it has ever been before. This has indeed been a thrilling month.[65]

Runciman senior preferred his own interpretation of his daughter-in-law's success:

> I do not look on St Ives victory as a triumph so much as a destiny that should be carefully watched. I see in it a purpose for you and for Hilda which will show itself in due time. Don't throw it away.[66]

Just as welcome, no doubt, as Runciman's words was his subsequent cheque for £21,500 – perhaps a million pounds in today's values. 'I am glad', he wrote, 'to be able to do something towards protecting you and all my kin from anxiety that cuts like a canker when it assails one.'[67]

In the months preceding the general election of 1929 Sir Walter was negotiating to offer financial support to Liberal Council candidates who would 'fight free altogether of LG, his money and his policy, who if returned would refuse his leadership'.[68] Yet, motivated by the belief that Liberalism could at last make an electoral breakthrough, the party's disparate factions, younger Runciman included, put on a show of unity. Standing now to replace his wife in St Ives, Walter's support for the party leader was, however, at best qualified and he refused to endorse Lloyd George's specific pledge to reduce unemployment to normal proportions within a year:

> As for the unemployed proposals I'm advocating the provision of work as warmly as Lloyd George, but I have not and shall not give a 'pledge' of what can be done, for I do not believe that we can get work soon enough to employ a million men in 12 months without any cost to the rates or taxes.[69]

Sir Walter agreed: 'it is unwise to promise that an effort so vast will fructuate in twelve months'.[70] The prospect of success at the polls prompted the father to address another homily to his son:

> The highest branches of the tree are within your reach. It is not by mere chance that you have been strong enough to withstand the storms of fortune … it was doubtless the course your destiny should take to fit you for the higher branches that will soon be strong enough to bear you. You climbed fast in the beginning and for some reason or other a check came which seemed to indicate that your political career was at an end, but you were guided to toil on by the unseen force that governs us all, and you are

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> now being used to fill a position that providence has waiting for you either in a political or commercial sphere.[71]

The façade of party unity did not long survive the announcement of the election's disappointing outcome. While more than five million voters had supported the Liberal Party, 23.4 per cent of the total, this translated into no more than fifty-nine seats in the new House of Commons, an improvement of just nineteen on the figure secured in 1924. The performance of the Runcimans well illustrated the party's mixed fortunes. While Walter was duly returned in St Ives, Hilda, standing now in Tavistock, lost narrowly to her Conservative opponent. The younger Runciman soon found himself once more out of sympathy with Lloyd George's leadership and, after accepting the deputy chairmanship of the Royal Mail in November 1930, prepared to bow out of front-line politics, announcing the following February his intention not to stand again for parliament. But the collapse of the Labour government, its replacement by an all-party 'National' administration and strong hints from the prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald, that he was likely to be recalled to high office prompted Runciman to change his mind. After the general election in October and the restoration of the cabinet to its normal size, the return to government duly took place.

Sir Walter hoped that his son might be offered the Exchequer. This was never a realistic aspiration, especially as the election had left the Conservatives dominant in the House of Commons. So while Neville Chamberlain took over as chancellor, Runciman was reinstated as president of the Board of Trade, a post he had first held during the First World War. Nonetheless, this was an important position, enabling him to effect the compromise with the Tories over tariffs that made the continuation of the National Government possible.[72] Runciman now drifted, almost imperceptibly, into the Liberal National group led by John Simon, though he was never personally close to Simon himself. As Runciman was now bearing the costs of the local party organisation, it proved relatively easy to take the St Ives Liberal Association with him.[73] And, granted that the Liberal Nationals soon entered into political and electoral alliance with the Conservatives, the transition was entirely acceptable to Runciman senior, partially fulfilling the change of allegiance he had contemplated a decade earlier. Yet his own preference remained for an unequivocal commitment to the Conservatives. It was 'a waste of time remaining attached to what is now a reactionary party and its affairs and policy are "yelpt" like a brood of puppies'.[74] It would be Baldwin, he insisted in 1936, 'if ever I go into politics again, I will join as my leader' – an unlikely proposition granted he was about to enter his ninetieth year![75] The mainstream Liberal Party, which left the government after the conclusion of the Ottawa Agreements of 1932, filled the old man with contempt. 'What a poor set the Libs are in opposition', he declared in 1934. 'The Budget is beyond their capacity to find a flaw they are capable of dealing practically with.'[76] But Lloyd George's attempts to re-enter the political arena via his 'New Deal' proposals of 1935 were more worrying: 'To my mind he produces the same old rags under different colours. People don't understand his flippant ingenuity so they open their mouths with astonishment and stamp him as a human oracle.'[77] When it briefly appeared that the Welshman might even join the National Government, Runciman was outraged: 'The hugging of LG to members of the Government frightens me. He is a monstrous danger to the country's best interests.'[78]

The early 1930s also saw significant changes in Sir Walter's private life. After several years of declining health, his wife, Ann Margaret, died in February 1933. Thereafter, Runciman turned increasingly to Mary Richmond, who had joined the family circle to look after Ann Margaret in her illness. Despite family disapproval, there was even the suggestion of Sir Walter's remarriage. In the event, he settled for 'adopting' Mary Richmond as his niece and she remained his constant companion for the rest of his life. Later in 1933 Runciman was elevated to the peerage, taking the title of Baron Runciman of Shoreston. This development, at a time before such titles could be disclaimed, had obvious implications for his son. Cuthbert Headlam, Conservative MP for Barnard Castle, recorded a lunch with the younger Runciman and his wife, Hilda: 'Mrs R told me that old Runciman got himself made a peer without saying a word about it to them: this seems incredible but may be true.'[79] Hilda Runciman, perhaps more ambitious for her husband than he was for himself, still nurtured hopes of his promotion to the Exchequer.

Despite his advanced years, Baron Runciman continued to enjoy reasonably good health, though he did suffer a serious fall in September 1934. Nonetheless, the possibility of a sudden by-election in St Ives became a matter of interest to local Liberals, determined to re-establish a presence in the constituency and recover the seat from the Liberal Nationals. Indeed, the younger Runciman became something of a bogeyman for the mainstream party following his intervention in Bodmin during the general election campaign of 1935, when his support for the Conservative candidate was widely blamed for the defeat of the incumbent Liberal, Isaac Foot.[80]

By the beginning of 1936, the president of the Board of Trade, now in his mid-60s, was contemplating a return to the world of business. His father, however, encouraged him to keep his options open: 'there is nothing … to favour your giving up public life. You cannot tell what form destiny has shaped for you.'[81] Changes in the government were inevitable after the coronation, when Baldwin had indicated he would

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retire. Baron Runciman urged his son to consider a change of post, 'if not the Exchequer, the Admiralty … The [new] PM whoever he is to be should hold up both hands for a man of such natural and varied knowledge as you.'[82] In practice, of course, the succession of Neville Chamberlain to the premiership was all but inevitable and it was he rather than either of the Runcimans who would determine Walter's political future. Chamberlain had been unimpressed by his colleague's recent ministerial performance – the first hints perhaps of the illness that was to cloud Runciman's final years – and 'did not attach any particular importance to his retention in the Cabinet'.[83] The offer of the non-departmental post of Lord Privy Seal was angrily rejected – 'I suddenly realised … how little value you attach to my services' – though the younger Runciman's subsequent elevation to a viscountcy assuaged some of his disappointment.[84] Characteristically, his father put the best possible interpretation on the course of events: 'be assured there is a big future before you. The day of your destiny has not yet ended.'[85] At a personal level, his son's elevation to the peerage gave him enormous pleasure: 'What a further joy and distinction to our family for both of us to sit in the Upper House as we did in the Commons.'[86]

The father remained vigorous almost to the end, though he was denied the chance to sit with his son in the Lords. He retained a tight hold on his business affairs, acquiring a controlling interest in the Anchor Line (Glasgow) as late as 1935. Just over a month after his ninetieth birthday, however, Runciman died at his Newcastle home, Fernwood House.

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Few private collections of papers, unless they were expressly created as documents of record, can provide anything like a continuous narrative of the period they cover. But, as in the case of the Runciman papers at Elshieshields Tower, they do throw illuminating shafts of light across the existing corpus of documentation, adding to the historical mosaic and thus enhancing our understanding of the past. The Elshieshields collection was examined when in the care of the Revd Dr Ann Shukman, great granddaughter of Sir Walter Runciman, but has recently been transferred to the University of Newcastle, where it will significantly augment what is already one of the most important private archives relating to the twentieth-century Liberal Party.[87]

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Unless otherwise stated, manuscript references are from the Runciman papers, formerly at Elshieshields Tower. Quotations from these papers appear by kind permission of the Revd Dr Ann Shukman. I have gained much understanding of the Runciman family from discussions with Dr Shukman. In these notes, for the avoidance of confusion, the two 'Walter Runcimans' are referred to as 'Sir W. Runciman' and 'W. Runciman' irrespective of the actual title each held at any given date.

1 C. Cook, *Sources in British Political History 1900–1951*, vol. iv (London, 1977), p. 145.
2 See, for example, R. S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill*, companion vol. i, part 2 (London, 1967), p. 1033. In a biographical footnote reference to Walter Runciman junior, Randolph Churchill, or more probably one of his research assistants, writes of a man who was created baronet in 1906, Baron in 1933 and Viscount in 1937. But the first two of these honours relate to the father rather than the son.
3 Obituary of Sir Steven Runciman, *The Times*, 2 Nov. 2000.
4 Sir Walter Runciman, *Before the Mast – And After* (London, 1928), pp. 17, 36.
5 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 7 Jul. 1922.
6 Runciman, *Before the Mast*, p. 242.
7 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 7 Feb. 1892.
8 Ibid., 29 Jul. 1891.
9 Ibid., 16 Mar. 1928.
10 Runciman, *Before the Mast*, p. 272.
11 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 29 Jun. 1903.
12 Ibid., 27 Jun. 1906.
13 The only biography of Walter Runciman junior is the unpublished PhD thesis by Jonathan Wallace, 'The Political Career of Walter (Viscount) Runciman', (Newcastle University, 1995). Several aspects of his career have, however, been well covered. See, inter alia, D. Dutton, 'Walter Runciman and the Decline of the Liberal Party', *Journal of Liberal History*, 84 (2014); T. McCulloch, 'Franklin Roosevelt and the Runciman Mission to Czechoslovakia, 1938', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 1, 2 (2003); T. McCulloch, 'Franklin Roosevelt and the Runciman Visit to Washington, 1937', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 4, 2 (2006); M. Pugh, 'Yorkshire and the New Liberalism', *Journal of Modern History*, 50, 1 (1971); P. Vysny, *The Runciman Mission to Czechoslovakia, 1938* (Basingstoke, 2003); and D. Wrench, '"Very Peculiar Circumstances": Walter Runciman and the National Government, 1931–3', *Twentieth Century British History*, 11, 1 (2000).
14 *The Times*, 10 Dec. 1909, cited H. Pelling, *The Social Geography of British Elections 1885–1910* (London, 1967), p. 328.
15 D. Dutton (ed.), *Odyssey of an Edwardian Liberal* (Gloucester, 1989), pp. 48, 54.
16 *The Times*, 14 Aug. 1937.
17 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 20 Jul. 1884.
18 Steven Runciman on his father. Notes taken by John Grigg.
19 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 3 Aug. 1884.
20 Steven Runciman on his father. Notes taken by John Grigg.
21 W. Runciman to Sir W. Runciman, 15 Jan. 1889.
22 Ibid., undated.
23 Ibid., 5 May 1890.
24 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 21 Feb. 1892.
25 Ibid., 7 Feb. 1892.
26 W. Runciman to mother, 19 Oct. 1890.
27 Ibid., 21 Feb. 1892.
28 Ibid., 12 Jun. 1892.
29 See, for example, obituary in the *Manchester Guardian*, 15 Nov. 1949. Jonathan Wallace repeats the error in his

biographical essay in D. Brack (ed.), *Dictionary of Liberal Biography* (London, 1998), p. 312.
30 W. Runciman to mother, 12 Jun. 1892.
31 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 7 Feb. 1892.
32 Ibid., 1 Jan. 1894.
33 W. Runciman to mother, 30 Sep.1900.
34 Ibid., 11 Apr. 1908.
35 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 11 Jan. 1908.
36 Ibid., 1 Mar. 1907.
37 Ibid., 15 Aug. 1909. Sir Walter later wrote that the People's Budget represented the 'reverse of sound finance'. *Before the Mast*, p. 282.
38 Ibid., 26 Oct. 1909.
39 Ibid., 11 Aug. 1911.
40 Sir Walter Runciman to Lady Runciman 9 Dec. 1916. Following this meeting, Edwin Montagu wrote that he had been 'deeply moved' by 'Asquith's firm hold on the affections of the whole Liberal Party'. R. Jenkins, *Asquith* (London, 1986), p. 461.
41 W. Runciman to mother, 7 Feb. 1919.
42 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 18 Nov. 1922.
43 W. Runciman to Sir W. Runciman, 3 Nov. 1924.
44 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 25 Feb. 1921. Runciman later wrote of 'one of the most debasing epochs of recent political history'. *Before the Mast*, p. 280.
45 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 25 Apr. 1921.
46 Ibid., 1 Feb. 1921.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., 18 Nov. 1922.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid., 30 July 1926.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 9 Jun. 1926. Interestingly, Runciman was also a great admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte, owned a considerable library of Napoleonic literature and himself added two books on this subject, *The Tragedy of St Helena* (1911) and *Drake, Nelson and Napoleon* (1919).
53 W. Runciman to Sir W. Runciman, 26 Mar. 1934.
54 Ibid., 13 Apr. 1934.
55 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 13 Apr. 1934.
56 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 28 Apr. 1920.
57 R. Douglas, *The History of the Liberal Party 1895–1970* (London, 1971), p. 181.
58 M. Asquith to Sir W. Runciman, undated (? early 1920s).
59 Ibid., 1 Nov. 1924. For Margot Asquith's extravagance, see C. Clifford, *The Asquiths* (London, 2003), pp. 83–4.
60 M. Asquith to Sir W. Runciman, 4 Dec. 1935.
61 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 6 Nov. 1926.
62 W. Runciman to Sir W. Runciman, 9 Nov. 1926.
63 Ibid., 27 July 1926.
64 Manuscript account by Hilda Runciman of her parliamentary career, 1928–9.
65 W. Runciman to Sir Walter Runciman, 17 Mar. 1928.
66 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 10 Mar. 1928.
67 Ibid., 16 Mar. 1928.
68 Lord Gladstone to Sir W. Runciman, 19 Jan. 1929.
69 W. Runciman to Sir W. Runciman, 9 Mar. 1929.
70 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 11 Mar. 1929.
71 Ibid., 14 Apr. 1929.
72 D. Wrench, ' "Very Peculiar Circumstances": Walter Runciman and the National Government, 1931–3', *Twentieth Century British History* 11, 1 (2000).
73 G. Tregidga, 'Turning of the Tide? A Case Study of the Liberal Party in Provincial Britain in the Late 1930s', *History* 92, 3 (2007), p. 354.
74 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 6 May 1934.
75 Ibid., 28 May 1936.
76 Ibid., 21 Apr. 1934.
77 Ibid., 18 Jan. 1935.
78 Ibid., 17 May 1935.
79 S. Ball (ed.), *Parliament and Politics in the Age of Baldwin and MacDonald* (London, 1992), p. 281.
80 Tregidga, 'Turning of the Tide?', p. 355.
81 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 27 Jan. 1936.
82 Ibid., 23 Mar. 1937.
83 University of Birmingham, Chamberlain MSS, NC18/1/1006, N. Chamberlain to H. Chamberlain 30 May 1937.
84 Ibid., NC7/11/30/112, W. Runciman to Chamberlain, 7 May 1937.
85 Sir W. Runciman to W. Runciman, 29 May 1937.
86 Ibid., 13 May 1937.
87 Sir Walter never forgot his own humble beginnings. One of the more attractive features of his character was his ongoing concern for his extended family and the help he offered to wayward nephews and nieces. He also diligently collected the surviving papers of his parents and siblings. These papers are presently housed at Elshieshields. It is Dr Shukman's wish that they too will, in due course, be added to the archive in Newcastle.

Letters to the Editor

Brecon & Radnor by-election

Like, I imagine, most people who were there, I have very happy memories of the 1985 by-election ('Richard Livsey and the Politics of Brecon and Radnor' – *Journal* 93, Winter 2016–17) – lovely scenery, great people and a terrific by-election buzz.

Two moments, particularly, stand out for me. The first was a real old-style rally with an array of speakers, including an inspiring address by Shirley Willams. There was also a piece of superb comedy from the great and sadly missed David Penhaligon, who informed the audience that he had been instructed to introduce David Owen, the next speaker,as a fellow West Countryman. Though professing not to know Dr Owen, he had come to the conclusion that this was fitting 'as I'm just a country bumpkin and he's one of the city sophisticates'. The audience erupted into laughter, apart from the humourless Owen.

My second memory is of a post-campaigning evening spent in the bar of Brecon's main hotel. It was a large room with big tables laid out for occupation by the different parties contesting the election. As we were settling down for some serious drinking, Screaming Lord Sutch, by now a by-election veteran, burst in plus guitar, appealing to our generosity to give him money towards his deposit in return for a few tunes. After a rousing rendition of 'Jailhouse Rock', he approached the Labour table to be shooed away. I'm happy to report that he received much better treatment from the Alliance table – and what a charming guy he was.

Mike Falchikov

Reports

Coalition: Could Liberal Democrats have handled it better?

Autumn conference meeting, 18 September 2016, with David Laws, Chris Huhne and Akash Paun; chair: Jo Swinson

Report by **Neil Stockley**

Between 2010 and 2015, the Liberal Democrats participated in the UK's first peacetime coalition government for some seventy years. They were momentous times for liberals, not least because the coalition came to an abrupt end with the 2015 general election, which was catastrophic for the party. The Liberal Democrats' achievements in office, what they did well, how they might have handled coalition better and lessons for the future will be debated for many years to come, not least by liberals who hope to share power again. At autumn conference, these questions were addressed by Akash Paun of the Institute for Government, David Laws, the former schools minister who was a key player in the coalition government, and Chris Huhne, the energy and climate change secretary from 2010 to 2012. As with the Liberal Democrat History Group meeting about the 2015 general election, held in July last year, there was a general reluctance to address whether the party's achievements were worth the electoral damage. The drivers of the electorate's harsh verdict on the Liberal Democrats, and they might have been prevented, again provided the dominant theme.

All three speakers accepted that, from the day the coalition took office, the party was doomed to lose a large amount of voter support. Akash Paun reminded us of the simple, brutal rule of coalitions in continental countries: the smaller parties almost always suffer at the ballot box. The senior partner claims credit for popular policies and achievements, and leaves the junior partner to take the blame for unpopular features of the government's performance. According to both David Laws and Chris Huhne, about half of the Liberal Democrats' voters from 2010 could have been expected to desert the party. Sure enough, the party's poll ratings began their nosedive within months of the government's formation. But the speakers analysed at some length the ways in which the party had made its burdens even heavier, and its electoral punishment worse than it should might been, largely as a result of inexperience in government and a certain political naiveté, combined with a failure, which was at times quite astonishing, to address basic questions of strategy.

The meeting heard how the damage that the Liberal Democrats inflicted on themselves had three elements: the structure of the government; the ways in which the coalition was presented; and the substance of specific policy decisions. All of these drove the party's core problem during the coalition: the loss of its distinctive political identity, which led directly to the electoral wipeout of 2015.

Akash Paun acknowledged that, immediately after the May 2010 general election, the Liberal Democrats were well prepared for coalition talks and did well at playing Labour and the Conservatives off against each other. The party's negotiating team had, however, given rather less thought to which ministerial positions the party should try to secure. He suggested that they should have driven a harder bargain, and laid claim to important public service departments that were of most interest to voters, such as Health and Education. David Laws was in complete agreement on this point, and also explained, quite fairly, that members of the team felt the need to keep their roles as negotiators separate from calculations as to which office they might themselves hold.

Chris Huhne believed that in accepting the offers of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), 'we walked into a Tory trap'. For these departments required the Liberal Democrats to make their 'messiest compromises', on tuition fees at BIS and nuclear power at DECC. In hindsight, Huhne reflected, Nick Clegg should have taken on a major department of state, such as the Foreign Office or the Home Office, and the party would have also been helped by having 'a gopher' minister at the Cabinet Office, 'minding what was going on'.

Similarly, the culture and structure of Whitehall was always going to present the Liberal Democrats with major challenges. Akash Paun believed that Whitehall, having grown accustomed, over many decades, to having one head of government, had no desire to allow a second centre of power, in the shape of Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg. He also charged that the Liberal Democrat negotiators did not think through what kind of support Nick Clegg would need in order to discharge his cross-departmental roles as deputy prime minister. Moreover, they had failed to ensure, in the early days of the government at least, that there were sufficient special advisers to support Liberal Democrat ministers dealing with Conservative ministers and their often radical policy proposals. As a result, the party failed too often to get to grips with some of the Conservatives' important, politically charged policies, such as the NHS reforms.

Both David Laws and Akash Paun were sure that the optics of the coalition had undermined the party's ability to be perceived as a separate, independent party that was making a real difference to government policies, rather than as a mere adjunct to the Conservatives. Laws pointed out that Nick Clegg had important roles in the government, as chair of the Cabinet Home Affairs Committee and first secretary of state. Whereas David Cameron was regularly filmed speaking for the government outside Number 10 Downing Street, Nick Clegg had no similar premises or media forum available to him. Two of his colleagues, Laws himself (briefly) and Danny Alexander successively held the role of chief secretary to the Treasury, yet the Conservative chancellor, George Osborne, always presented the government's major economic statements, some of which included key Liberal Democrat policies, to the Commons and the public.

The Liberal Democrats may have been complicit in making themselves secondary characters in the story. As soon as the coalition took office, Nick Clegg had appeared with David Cameron in what Mr Paun called their famous 'love in' press conference in the Downing Street Rose Garden. In the same vein, David Laws cited Nick's decision to sit immediately next to David Cameron in the Commons, listening and

looking up to him at Prime Minister's Questions, the part of parliamentary proceedings that features most frequently in TV news bulletins.

On policy, the main topic of discussion was, understandably, tuition fees – 'the area we made the biggest hash of,' according to David Laws. He suggested that the party had made two basic mistakes. The first was to go into the 2010 general election still promising to oppose any increase in tuition fees, which Laws saw as a hugely expensive commitment that would do nothing to promote social mobility. (Akash Paun opined that the presentation of the pledge showed that the Liberal Democrats did not seriously expect to be part of the government after the 2010 general election; in other words, they did not really expect to have to deliver their promises on tuition fees.) Laws also believed that the Liberal Democrats underestimated the high political price they would pay for not following through with the commitment once in government. He suggested, with the benefit of hindsight, that the party should have vetoed the rise in tuition fees in the early months of the government, invoking the clause in the coalition agreement that allowed Liberal Democrat MPs to abstain in the relevant Commons vote. When the vote came, they went three different ways, yet in the public mind, the government parties ended up standing together behind a single compromise policy, which represented a broken promise by the Liberal Democrats.

Laws cited other policy mistakes: the 'bedroom tax', which he saw as a logical move in principle, that had been implemented too bluntly and with too many unfair impacts; and the NHS Bill which he called 'a terrible mess … that came of nowhere', for which the leaderships of both coalition parties were ultimately responsible.

For David Laws, and Akash Paun, the tuition fees debacle was the starkest example of a bigger, more fundamental problem for the Liberal Democrats: the loss of the party's distinctive identity after they went into coalition. Laws conceded that 'we thought too little' about the damage that was done to the party's brand, and what could be done to address it.

What, then, of the Liberal Democrats' many achievements during the coalition? Surely they proved that the party had made a positive difference, with an underlying framework of clear liberal values? Laws began his contribution with a list of policies delivered by the party, which ranged from the pupil premium, expanded early years' education for disadvantaged children, free school meals, the increasing personal tax allowances and halving the deficit to pension reform, the creation of the Green Investment Bank, shared parental leave, the 5p tax on plastic bags, and more. 'It's an impressive list, of which we can be genuinely proud,' he contended. Then there were the Conservative initiatives that the Liberal Democrats had put a stop to, including harsh welfare cuts, the dismantling of employment laws and the 'Snoopers Charter'. ('The list goes on and on,' he said.) Moreover, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats had come together, during a financial crisis, in a way that was 'genuine' and 'productive' and that provided 'stable' and 'mature' government, Laws maintained. He went on to stress how policy-making under the coalition had been more rigorous than had been the case under recent (and subsequent) single-party administrations.

Laws was correct to remind the meeting of how much the Liberal Democrats had delivered. However, in so doing, he may have exposed some of the weaknesses of the party's position in the coalition. On 7 May 2015, all of the achievements he listed, impressive as they were, were not in themselves, an electoral asset for the party and did not help to any significant degree in addressing its lack of an identity with voters. The meeting addressed some of the reasons, including the fact that the Conservatives took the credit for some key policies, most notably the increased personal tax allowance. I would add that almost none of the policies were perceived as being 'pre-owned' and then 'delivered' by the Liberal Democrats in office. Moreover, lists of policies seldom resonate with voters. Chris Huhne summed up the Liberal Democrats' predicament when he charged that they had failed to communicate their achievements or encapsulate them in a simple slogan or message. He also implied that some of the achievements may have been too small in scale to form the basis of an attractive appeal to the electorate.

Similarly, David Laws was correct to point out how the Liberal Democrats stopped some of the Conservatives' more pernicious policies but, as Akash Paun reminded us, they were always going to have a difficult time claiming as successes the prevention of policies that had not eventuated and that, as a result, the vast majority of voters had not heard of.

David Laws and Chris Huhne explained how they and their colleagues had tried to ameliorate the impact of the Liberal Democrats' anticipated loss in

voter support by changing the system for electing MPs. The Alternative Vote (AV) referendum of May 2011 had ended in disaster, and a personal humiliation for Nick Clegg. David Laws believed that the party made two fatal misjudgements. One was to agree that the ballot should be about AV, a compromise solution that would not lead to proportional outcomes and was too difficult to sell to voters. The other was to 'not think hard enough about how to win the referendum, especially as a third party without the active support of either Labour or the Conservatives.

Chris Huhne argued that the party had underestimated the confrontational nature of the AV referendum and the surrounding politics. The hard political reality, he said, was that Labour would oppose anything on principle, despite having advocated AV in their 2010 manifesto. Here, the big lesson Laws and Huhne drew for Liberal Democrats in a future coalition government was that they needed to secure at least one other major party's support for electoral reform, in order to make the campaign for change as broad-based as possible. These observations were surely correct, but other parties, more likely Labour, will only support reform when they perceive that it is in their own interests to do so.

The meeting heard many interesting suggestions as to what the Liberal Democrats might have done differently in order to reduce the electoral damage from going into coalition. Some of them broached the same issues as the group's July 2015 meeting, and left open a large number of questions. Once again, there were few easy or guaranteed solutions.

Akash Paun briefly floated some 'straw' suggestions. One was that the coalition itself was a mistake. He soon recalled that the party's options in May 2010 were very limited: a coalition with Labour was not viable. Had the Liberal Democrats entered into a confidence and supply agreement with the Conservatives, they would have had much less impact on government policy and with no Fixed Term Parliaments Act, Cameron would have been able to call an early general election.

Another was that Nick Clegg and his colleagues could have 'said no' more often, and blocked more Conservative policies. Similarly, Chris Huhne mused that the Liberal Democrats might have forced the Conservatives to concede on policies that were just as critical to their constituencies as tuition fees were for Liberal Democrat supporters. Later, he argued that the Liberal Democrats had forgotten too easily that the Conservatives could have achieved very little without their support. ('We have got to be tougher,' he said, and 'bend the knee to nobody.') Still, both concluded that Cameron and his colleagues could easily have responded in kind, creating a standoff that would have rendered the government much less effective.

Some suggestions raised interesting questions and conundrums that can never be resolved. Akash Paun recalled how, late in the life of the government, he had been converted to the view that the Liberal Democrats should withdraw from the coalition, perhaps a year out from the 2015 general election. During question time, Michael Steed recalled how, in September 1978, the Liberal Party had ended its pact with the Callaghan Labour government, which had given the party more than six months to recover from the downturn in its electoral fortunes, and achieve a respectable result in the May 1979 general election. He argued that, had the Liberal Democrats followed this precedent and withdrawn from the coalition a year before the 2015 general election, they may have saved between fifteen and twenty seats.

David Laws was not persuaded that the public would have been impressed by such an action, or that they would have so easily detached the Liberal Democrats from the difficult decisions the party had taken. His argument was compelling. A fully-fledged coalition that lasts five years has a very different impact on a party's reputation than a pact lasting eighteen months. Even so, Akash Paun posed a fair question: would the Liberal Democrats would have really fared any worse than they did in 2015 had they staged an early departure from the government?

But I believe that Mr Paun was on shakier ground when he pondered whether a change of leader – say, in 2014 – may have helped the party, given the lack of viable alternatives to Nick Clegg and the dearth of alternative political strategies that any new leader could have pursued.

During question time, Andrew George, the former MP for St Ives, criticised the 'one party' model of coalition and favoured adopting some looser form of governing arrangement for a future power-sharing arrangement. He recalled how Nick Clegg had made his own Commons statement on the Leveson Report into the press, thereby enabling the party to carve out its own position. David Laws replied, convincingly, that Leveson was a unique situation and if replicated in future it could expose disagreements that 'cut both ways', across the gamut of government policies.

Akash Paun believed that junior coalition partners could define more distinctive political territory and referred to the way in which New Zealand's multiparty governments have evolved, so as to allow ministers from smaller parties a degree of latitude to disagree in public with some government policies. Whilst New Zealand's constitutional arrangements may merit further study in this regard, Liberal Democrats should be aware that in successive elections, junior coalition parties and support parties in that country have continued to fare badly at the ballot box.

Michael Steed suggested that Liberal Democrats in a future coalition should follow the continental practice of taking over all the ministerial positions in a few key departments, rather than being 'scattered across Whitehall', and deliver a policy agenda that the party could own. Chris Huhne responded that a party in coalition would, inevitably, have to take responsibility for the government's policies. Moreover, the Liberal Democrats needed a 'seat at the table' across Whitehall (though not necessarily in all departments) in order to influence 'events'.

This was a lively and stimulating meeting that produced much food for thought for Liberal Democrats, now and in the years and decades to come. At the very least, those entering into coalition government in future should be better informed than their predecessors about the big strategic questions and the tactical pitfalls that they need to address. There was, however, one surprising aspect of the meeting. The pretext for the coalition, for both parties, was the financial crisis that the country faced in May 2010. For better or for worse, the government was defined largely by its economic policies, yet the meeting hardly touched on them. Perhaps a future meeting will address directly the coalition's economic record and the role of the Liberal Democrats in this crucial area of policy, in the context of the history of British liberal thought?

Neil Stockley is a former Policy Director for the Liberal Democrats and a long-standing member of the Liberal Democrat History Group.

Liberalism and the Great War

Alan Mumford analyses Winston Churchill's and David Lloyd George's volumes on the First World War.

Churchill and Lloyd George: Libera

Winston Churchill (1874–1965) and David Lloyd George (1863–1945)

Historians and biographers have already reviewed the extent to which the volumes written by Churchill and Lloyd George about the First World War are accurate, fair and plausible in respect of their views on strategy and its implementation. This article, however, is concerned with two issues not written about previously: questions about liberalism and authorship. First, in the four volumes of Churchill's *The World Crisis* (*The Aftermath* is not considered here) and Lloyd George's six-volume *War Memoirs,* is entry into the war justified

l authors on the First World War?

by reference to Liberal values?[1] And, later, was their conduct during the war as described in their books responsive to those values? Second, were they the sole, main or only part authors? Robbins claimed that Lloyd George did not write the *Memoirs*: 'though he embellished them at suitable intervals'[2] (a claim which was the cause of the research for this article). Does Churchill's reliance on others make him less the author?

Churchill and Lloyd George in the Liberal government 1905–1914

Churchill moved from the Conservative Party to the Liberals in 1904 largely because of his adherence to free trade, and as a minister he was interventionist on social issues, introducing labour exchanges, and he started work on unemployment insurance. At the Home Office later, he brought in a better balance between crime and punishment. From 1911 his focus was on equipping the navy. Lloyd George was even more interventionist in helping the less well off, through insurance, old age pensions and redistributionist budgets. The two of them were leaders of a particular strand of Liberalism: they were extremely vocal partisans on the 1909 Budget and the House of Lords, yet both were engaged in the abortive attempt in 1910 to agree a coalition to avoid a constitutional crisis.

Entry into the war

Both emphasised the significance of the German invasion of Belgium – Churchill as a treaty obligation, Lloyd George also as a 'little country' moral case. Churchill had no doubts about entering the struggle, and eagerly sought to persuade Lloyd George to join him. He emphasised their potential contribution on social policy.

There was a significant difference in their focus as the war started. Churchill's oral belligerence matched his interest in directing a major part of armed action – through the navy. Lloyd George had no such direct involvement – his energy was devoted to managing the financial consequences.

Did Lloyd George and Churchill carry Liberalism into the war?

Biographers have not paid attention to the extent to which Lloyd George and Churchill were proponents of Liberalism during the First World War. Lloyd George's famous speech at Queen's Hall on 19 September 1914 continued to give emphasis to defending Belgium as a treaty obligation but also as a small country. This was really the only – and only by inference – reference to Liberal principles. (Strangely he did not refer to this speech in his *War Memoirs*.) Conscription, of which Lloyd George was an early and pressing advocate, was initially unacceptable, especially to many Liberals. It was gradually pushed through the coalition cabinet with Conservative encouragement but opposed by Liberals McKenna, Runciman and Simon. Simon opposed it as conflicting with Liberal principles, and resigned; McKenna opposed it as a matter of practicality – removing workers from industry – and stayed.

Lloyd George's strength and the reason for his eventual elevation to prime minister was that he was – and, perhaps more importantly, was seen to be – a vigorous activist. His successes in the war were based on his personality and his drive, not on any pursuit of Liberal ideals. However, he acted as a Liberal on domestic issues of significance. He was particularly suited as he had tried before the war to resolve disputes between workers and employers, and continued to give special attention to these, for example over wages and accepting women into 'men's jobs'. Asquith also gave him the task of trying to negotiate a peaceful settlement in Ireland in 1916. These negotiations

Biographers have not paid attention to the extent to which Lloyd George and Churchill were proponents of Liberalism during the First World War.

at home and in Ireland were also adherent to Liberal principles.

Other Liberal interests are featured in his *War Memoirs*. Analysis of the index to the six-volume version of his *War Memoirs* shows seventeen lines of references to trade unions, and twenty-two to what was happening in the Liberal Party. There were thirteen lines on the role of women and suffrage, and twenty on conscription. There are nine lines of references to his attempt to tackle the problems in industry caused by alcohol. He wrote fully about the creation of Fisher's Education Act – very much a Liberal measure. However, he supported the Defence of the Realm Act, which conflicted with Liberal sensitivities about civil liberties; and he made no reference to press censorship, which also was in conflict with traditional Liberal values.

It is illuminating to compare the attention paid in Churchill's *Memoirs* to domestic and specifically Liberal issues with those identified by Lloyd George. There is no reference to the problems which gained Lloyd George's attention as cabinet minister and prime minister. Churchill's world crisis is a history of activity by the navy and the army – understandable in part because of his cabinet responsibilities but indicative of his lack of interest in Liberalism during the war. He wrote a little about women – as munitions workers not as potential voters. There is no indication once the war was in progress that he tried to follow through his suggestion in August 1914 that he and Lloyd George could implement a wide social policy. Neither of them refers to the major break in the Liberal principle of free trade made by McKenna in September 1915 when he placed import duties on 'luxury goods'.

Churchill, in contrast to Lloyd George, was excited at the prospect of, and in the early days the actuality of, war. Margot Asquith recorded him in January 1915: 'I would not be out of this glorious, delicious war for anything the world could give me.' He added, 'I say don't repeat that I said the word delicious – you know what I mean.'[3]

Lloyd George had none of Churchill's direct experience of war and indeed was a physical coward when it came to direct involvement. They both believed that slaughter on the Western Front was unacceptable because it was unsuccessful. So they both pursued the idea of different venues for battles. But this was imaginative minds attempting to produce a different solution, not Liberals trying to produce a Liberal answer.

It is illuminating to compare the attention paid in Churchill's *Memoirs* to domestic and specifically Liberal issues with those identified by Lloyd George. There is no reference to the problems which gained Lloyd George's attention as cabinet minister and prime minister.

Their Liberalism after 1918

Lloyd George and Asquith led two Liberal parties after 1918. Lloyd George, reliant on Conservative MP's, increasingly sought to create a new centre party, and his government had few Liberal credits, although his Liberalism was evident in some aspects of the Peace Treaty of 1919. Liberal reunion over free trade in 1923 did not lead to a united party with a distinct Liberal message. But gradually he decided to return to interventionist Liberalism expressed in the 'We can conquer unemployment' manifesto for the 1929 general election. His big new ideas produced a small number of Liberal MPs.

Incapacitated through ill health and unable to participate in the 1931 general election, Lloyd George gave up leadership of the Liberals and effectively any hope of having a major role in government again. This provided the occasion for him to write his *War Memoirs*, still a Liberal.

Churchill was re-elected as a Liberal, supporting Lloyd George, in 1918 but lost the 1922 general election. Thereafter he was a political chameleon. He fought the 1923 general election as a Liberal, but lost. He stood again quickly for the Abbey Division of Westminster as an 'Independent and Anti-Socialist', but lost to a Conservative. In the general election of 1924 he gave his full support to the Conservative Party, and stood and won as a Constitutionalist without a Conservative opponent. Baldwin surprisingly appointed him as chancellor of the exchequer in the government he formed and Churchill re-joined the Conservative Party. The only threads of Liberalism as chancellor were continued adherence to retention of free trade for industrial policy, a new pension scheme for widows and orphans and a constant search for reductions in expenditure, a return to Gladstonian verities. He started major work on *The World Crisis* while still a Liberal in 1920, but completed it as he retreated from the Liberal Party. The work expressed a Churchillian rather than a Liberal or Conservative view.

Lloyd George and Churchill – their experience as writers

The foregoing review provides the context within which Churchill and Lloyd George wrote their memoirs, and the extent to which what they wrote was affected by their behaviour and beliefs about Liberalism. But how were the books written?

There was a major difference in the literary experience of Churchill and Lloyd George. Churchill made considerable sums of money from his journalism. He had published his first book in 1898 – largely drawn from the articles he wrote for the *Daily Telegraph* as an observer of a campaign in Northern India. Within a year he had published a further two volumes about the war in the Sudan. These were more substantial efforts which gave much more context and history. The following two books involved his own direct experience during the Boer War – and especially his capture and escape. The next stage of his development as an author (putting aside his one novel) was the work he did over three years on a life of his father, Lord Randolph, published in January 1906. The book received generally favourable reviews, but the most significant

comment about it in terms of discussing his authorship of *The World Crisis* is that of Roy Jenkins: 'He had not yet taken to his later habits of dictation and employing research assistants. The manuscript of Lord Randolph Churchill is all in his own hand, and the work on the documents was also done by himself.'[4]

If we put aside experiences at school, the first relevant experience for Lloyd George was in writing articles as a young lawyer and prospective politician in Wales. He wrote for local Welsh papers in Welsh. When he moved to London as an MP he wrote articles mainly for Liberal-oriented daily newspapers in London and Manchester. They put his views over, gained attention, and earned money, important for him. His first book, *Is It Peace?*, was published after leaving the premiership.[5] It reprinted unchanged his journalism of that time. After he dropped his idea of writing his *War Memoirs* in 1924 (see later), his next effort was a small book on *The Truth about Reparations and War Debt*, published in 1932.[6] The absence for fourteen years of any significant literary work on his experience during the First World War can be explained as being due to recreating the Liberal Party and to his ability to earn very large sums of money from his journalism.

Churchill as author of *The World Crisis*

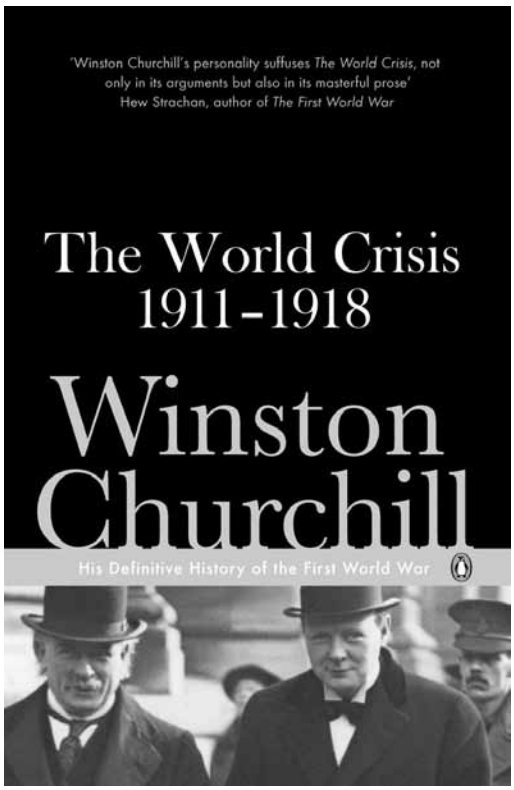
In the view of Malcolm Muggeridge, at least, '*The World Crisis* … must be considered, in a sense, the production of a committee rather than of an individual author.'[7]

When were the volumes written?

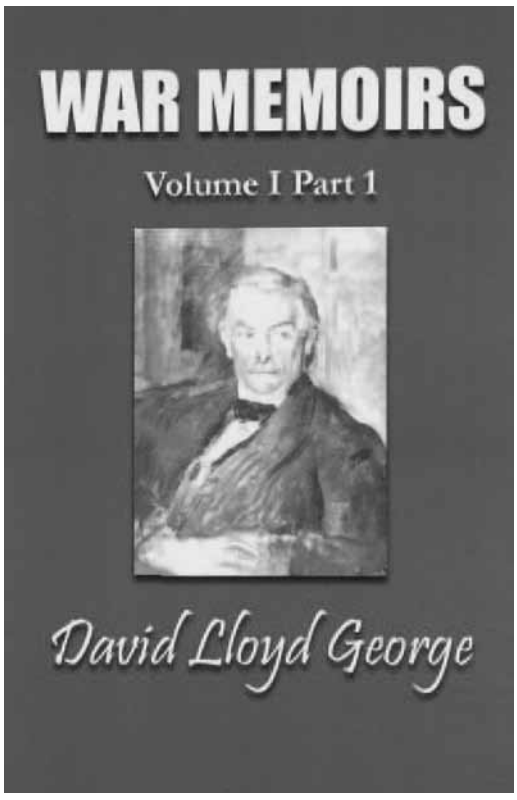
At least from the time of the failure of the Dardanelles Campaign, Churchill had wanted to publish his account. The memorandum he produced for the cabinet in 1915, about the Dardanelles, was largely incorporated eventually in *The World Crisis*. Serious consideration of a more general memoir started in November 1919. Detailed preparation occurred in 1920, when he agreed contracts for the volumes and for serialisation in *The Times*, and committed to having the book ready by December 1922. By January 1921 he said he had written a great part of the first volume. This work was undertaken relatively close to the events he was describing. When he lost office and his seat in 1922, he was free to devote more time to writing. He spent six months in the South of France and claimed to have produced in one period more than 20,000 words in six days of writing. He had completed much of the writing by the time he was appointed as chancellor of the exchequer in 1924, although he continued to work on it until it was completed in 1925.

Motivations

Churchill's earlier books had been written because he enjoyed writing and saw it as a way of establishing himself as a public figure. Initially he had proposed to write the book solely about his time as First Lord of the Admiralty, but this was soon extended into a more general survey. His bitter defensiveness over the Dardanelles was the prime motivator when he started in 1919. The balance of motivation changed after 1922 when he lost the ministerial salary of £5,000 a year he had received for most of the time since 1910. Lough has shown that his books and journalism were essential as a means of supporting his large scale over-spending.[8]



Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis 1911–1918* (abridged, one-volume version, Penguin, 2007)



David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, Vol. I Part 1 (this version: Simon Publications, 1943)

The focus on the Dardenelles remained, so that around 242 pages out of 2,150 pages were devoted to it. His ego was certainly involved, captured memorably in A. J. Balfour's comment, 'I am immersed in Winston's autobiography *The World Crisis* disguised as a history of the universe.'[9] Churchill described his own motivation in volume I. He referred to many other accounts already published, offering what he thought to be incorrect views about events. So, 'In all these circumstances I felt it both my right and my duty to set forth the manner in which I endeavoured to discharge my share in these hazardous responsibilities. In doing so I have adhered to certain strict rules. I have made no statement of fact relating to Naval operations or Admiralty business, on which I do not possess an unimpeachable documentary proof.'[10] However, 'I must therefore at the outset disclaim the position of the historian. It is not for me with my record and special point of view to promise a final conclusion. … I present it as a contribution to history of which note should be taken with other accounts.'[11]

How was The World Crisis *written?*

Churchill's first books on India and Africa were written by hand as was his biography of his father, Lord Randolph Churchill. He did his own research on this: he was given access to documents at Blenheim Palace, and had some help from his brother. *The World Crisis* was different in two respects. The material was developed around documents and largely dictated to shorthand writers, and although he organised research for it he depended this time on much more significant help from a number of people, such as Admiral Thomas Jackson on naval issues and General James Edmunds on the army.

He had not kept a diary but had retained a lot of documents. He pursued more material from ex-colleagues and departments. In his introduction to the two-volume abridgement, Churchill says, 'the key documents are reprinted in their integrity' (sic).[12] (But see Prior on this in Aftermath later.)

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In early drafts he wrote (in red ink) material around the documents which he was using in the text. The narrative sections were usually dictated to a shorthand writer who had worked for him in the Admiralty and continued with Churchill for four years after 1918.

In some areas the kind of detailed briefing notes provided for him became incorporated in drafts for the final chapters. Churchill wrote to Admiral Jackson, setting out his process for producing a draft: 'My habit is to dictate in the first instance what I have in my mind on the subject and a body of argument which I believe is substantially true and in correct proportion: and this I hope may be found to be the case as far as possible.' In addition to correcting and perhaps adding to the account he had drafted, he wanted any further suggestions for improving the text.[13] Prior writes of an extreme example, 'unlike any of the other wartime chapters of *The World Crisis*, Churchill's final chapter on the U Boat War is substantially based on the work of one of his naval advisers, and Churchill described his use of it: "I have rewritten your excellent account in the more highly coloured and less technical style suited to the lay reader." '[14]

One person who helped, perhaps surprisingly, was Haig, who gave him comments and maybe even some papers. Haig actually welcomed the eventual product. Churchill's original draft of volume I contained more criticisms of Haig than appeared in the final version, after Haig's comments. He also changed his account of the issue about whether reinforcements were held back in 1918: his published version agreed with Haig's recollections not those of Lloyd George. Prior provides another example of a change in a draft. He removed criticism of Bonar Law, perhaps because by 1922 he was leaning towards a rapprochement with the Conservative Party.

A different kind of help was given by Eddie Marsh, who was Churchill's civil service private secretary in the Colonial Office. Marsh advised on grammar and words. 'In one of *The World Crisis* volumes he used a coinage of his own 'choate' to signify the opposite of inchoate. I knew quite well that the word had no right to exist and it was my clear duty to warn him; but I thought it expressive and pleasing … so I let it pass; and though he forgave me, I have never forgiven myself for the obloquy it brought on his head.'[15]

In 1922 Marsh wrote to Churchill, 'You are very free with your commas.' Churchill replied, 'I always reduce them to a minimum, and use "and" or an "or" as a substitute not as an addition. Let us argue it out.'[16] Marsh who remained a civil servant until 1937, continued with this kind of assistance for Churchill.

When Churchill started writing *The World Crisis*, and particularly when he went to France for six months, he devoted ordinary working hours to his writing. He may have worked also at nights; as he certainly did on later books, dictating to his forbearing secretaries. Unfortunately, we have no direct evidence from secretaries who worked on *The World Crisis*.

The question of what proportion of words in the eventual volumes were (apart from the documents) written by Churchill as compared with words presented to him by experts and assistants is not clear. But Muggeridge's claim that *The World Crisis* was the work of a committee is clearly untrue. Apart from any other evidence it is impossible to imagine any individual or groups carrying out prolonged mimicry throughout four lengthy volumes. What can be said with certainty is that the habits of politicians then, and of politician authors, was substantially different from those with which we are familiar today. Politicians nowadays deliver speeches and books drafted and redrafted by people who are explicitly

employed to do that. (An ex-cabinet minister I interviewed a few years ago said, when I pointed out an error in his autobiography, 'But I read every word of it after it was written'.)

What was produced

The initial production was four volumes of *The World Crisis*, followed by a fifth, *The Aftermath*, which dealt with events after the war. In 1931 an abridged two-volume version with very few changes was published. Churchill in his preface to that version said that 'I have not found it necessary to alter in any material way the facts and foundations of the story, nor the conclusions which I drew from them.' He had 'pruned a mass of technical detail and some personal justification.'[17] This also appeared as a paperback in 2007.

Clearance

Politicians had been allowed to take their copies of their personal papers when they left their ministerial jobs. Hankey, as cabinet secretary from 1916, attempted to impose a view that such papers and other records of discussion were cabinet secrets not to be revealed and that no one was entitled to make public use of cabinet documents without the permission of the king. When Churchill published the first volume in 1923, his defence in using these papers was that official sources had been used in the memoirs of admirals and field marshals and he was entitled to provide a different view. Lloyd George had argued in favour of the publication of official papers: 'There is such a thing as fair play even when politicians are attacked.'[18]

When there was an attempt in 1934, ten years after *The World Crisis* but now after Lloyd George's memoirs, to require the return of official papers to the official archives, Churchill argued that they were his personal possession and therefore did not need to be returned.

Immediate reviews

Reviews of volume I were generally favourable. The *New Statesman* thought the book was a vindication of Churchill's actions at the Admiralty and though 'remarkably egotistical' was 'honest'. Margot Asquith's personal letter to him made the remarkable claim that she 'started and finished it in a night'. The tone of some reviews changed for the second volume. *The Times* criticised him 'for distorting documents and deploying undue censure in his account of the Dardanelles'.[19] A particularly interesting review was that of J. M. Keynes who wrote that Churchill 'pursues no vendetta, and shows no malice'. He saw it as 'a tractate against war – more effective than the work of a pacifist could be'.[20]

General Maurice reviewed his second volume and said that it differed from the first: where 'he was brilliant and generous, he is in this second volume querulous and mean.' Maurice was particularly bothered by 'nauseating' attacks on generals.[21] In the UK, the most detailed criticisms appeared in a book by Colonel the Lord Sydenham. Although he liked the literary style, 'many of the conclusions he has formed are inaccurate and the theories he has formulated unsound.'[22]

Rose writes that American reviews were mostly positive, but there were some telling criticisms. The reviewer in the *American Historical Review* took the view that the book was readable for the layman but that the professional historian would have a different opinion. He also 'detailed Churchill's tendency to blame others for his own failures'.[23]

One potential reviewer is absent from this survey. There is nothing in the diaries of Frances Stevenson or A. J. Sylvester to show that Lloyd George read *The World Crisis* when it was published. But he did so when he prepared to write his *War Memoirs* in 1931.

Lloyd George as author of his *War Memoirs*

Robbins' extraordinary claim that Lloyd George did not write the memoirs ignored the biographies (Thomson, Owen, Rowland) and the diaries of Frances Stevenson and A. J. Sylvester which showed how much Lloyd George wrote or dictated. Those diaries give us so much more information on Lloyd George's method of working and his productivity than is available for Churchill.

Motivations for writing the memoirs

Lloyd George started preparations for his memoirs on the war in 1922 and wrote a chapter dealing with the events of 4 August 1914. By 1922 he had been frustrated in his attempt to form a new political party, had developed for a time the ambition to be the editor of *The Times* and claimed to be exhausted by his political work. The memoirs became a serious proposition when he secured a contract for publication with American publishers and associated serialisation in America and the UK. News that he would receive £90,000 for this created a storm and on 28 August 1922 a statement was issued for him which said that he would give the money derived from the book to charities connected with the relief of suffering caused by the war. That Lloyd George, even with his level of energy, could have presumed he could write this book at the same time as being prime minister suggests that he had no idea then of the work that would be required. In fact, when no longer prime minister he took on remunerative journalism. He gave up work on the memoirs entirely in 1924, when he was fully reactivated as a Liberal leader. In 1922 the money motivation may have been quite strong. He certainly expressed pleasure as monetary offers progressively increased. It should be remembered that there was not then a pension for prime ministers.

When he started work again in 1932 he was no longer leader of the Liberal Party, which freed up

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his time. It is of interest to assess whether or to what extent his decision to write the *War Memoirs* was influenced by Churchill's *The World Crisis*. He wrote to Frances Stevenson about Churchill's effort, on 26 November 1931: 'I am reading Winston's Crisis. Brilliantly written – but too much apologia to be of general value. How he foresaw everything and was prepared etc. I could tell another tale about his shells, mines and torpedoes.'[24] Later he wrote, 'I have read marked and annotated Winston's four volumes. You might have thought the central figure throughout was WSC himself. He is not always fair to me.'[25]

A factor in 1932 was that memoirs by participants or friends of participants during the war had emerged with views about the war which were contrary to those which Lloyd George held, and some of which in his view were factually inaccurate. A need to re-establish what he regarded as his proper reputation in relation to his contribution in successfully fighting the war was another element – self-justification.

In the preface to volume I he justified the memoirs, asserting that all the dominant personalities of the war had told their tale. (He forgot President Wilson.) He claimed to be giving evidence – but in some places it is clearly the case for the prosecution. 'I regret more than words can express the necessity for telling the bare facts of our bloodstained stagger to victory. But I have to tell them or leave unchallenged the supremacy of misleading and therefore dangerous illusions.'[26] (It is not obvious that he regretted having to comment on Haig!)

The first volume appeared in September 1933, and succeeding volumes appeared until the final volume was published in 1936. In addition, he worked on a two-volume abridged version in 1937, published in 1938.

The process of writing

Lloyd George kept no diary and began writing the *War Memoirs* much later than Churchill. There were no cabinet minutes until LG became prime minister in December 1916. Sylvester ensured that the large collection of official papers LG held at Churt, his Surrey house, were indexed by two clerks from the Cabinet Office, which made later clearance by Hankey easier.

He was relatively inactive in the House of Commons after 1931, and his last significant effort to create public support for his ideas, particularly on unemployment in 1935, did not seriously delay the production of his last volume. Lloyd George wrote by hand, and also dictated drafts.

Frances Stevenson and Sylvester comment in their diaries on the process. Frances records a discussion in February 1934 'of the alternative merits of writing in one's own handwriting as against dictating.'[27] Unfortunately she does not offer a conclusion!

Most biographies have used one source (Lockhart) from 1933 on how Lloyd George produced drafts: 'The manuscript was written in bed between the hours of five and eight am,' ... all in 'A stumpy pencil which he never sharpens'. 'He owes too, something to his two typists who alone of living mortals can decipher his manuscript'.[28] One biographer adds, 'What he had written would be typed and he would work over it again until about eleven thirty. He worked again after tea but not after dinner.'[29]

A. J. Sylvester, his principal private secretary, gives a different account when work started on 20 September 1932. 'He suddenly rushed in to see me, and suddenly dictated the very first words of his war memoirs, amounting to some 400 words. In the evening he dictated just under 3,000.'[30] On 20 January 1933 'he remarked to me that he was fitter mentally and physically now than before the operations. Previously he could never have done what he was now doing in the way of writing his book. He had started in August – incidentally when everybody else had been about to go on holiday – and finished on 1st December. During that time, he had written 230,000 words.'[31]

Drafts were produced and sent to others for comment. Those comments sometimes influenced what was finally produced, depending particularly on how strongly LG held his original view, sometimes in defiance of the comments offered.

A brilliantly evocative, different picture of how the volumes were written is provided by Fraser.

> His method of composition was to write 10 or 15 pages of extremely incisive and opinionated commentary unsupported by any sources, to launch each chapter. … The skilful welding of Lloyd George's rousing tirades, brilliant character sketches and ever present sense of the appropriate shades of innuendo with the tirelessly redrafted documentary framework provided by Thomson and Stevenson. He would redraft ineffectual passages in briefs prepared for him by Thomson and would insert pungent sentences, often slashing at some particular bête noire in the high command or leadership.[32]

However, examination by this author of the Lloyd George papers quoted by Fraser do not provide evidence for this colourful description.

Although Lockhart said most of the writing was done at Churt, in fact a great deal was written during trips abroad, to Portugal, Morocco, Jamaica: 230,000 words were produced in Portugal in January 1934 (on a family holiday). In January 1936 LG was in Marrakech and wrote 160,000 words in six weeks – in round figures 4,000 words a day on average. 'On one or two days however he had done nothing because he had been travelling so on the other days he had written, in his own hand, as many as 10,000 words.'[33] (This does seem a high figure.)

The Lloyd George papers in the parliamentary archives provide further direct proof on the issue

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of how much of the material was actually handwritten by him. The archive is incomplete – there is no way of knowing what was not kept. There are a few typewritten draft chapters, and most of these seem to be the final draft – which does not clarify what he had originally produced. However, a handwritten description of Asquith[34] is the verbatim version of what was finally published, as is a draft on the Politics of the War,[35] also reproduced in the printed version. Even more illuminating in terms of how much LG actually wrote are notebooks covering less exciting commentary: one handwritten in Jamaica in January 1936 covers 100 pages. These are in perfectly legible writing – some other material is indeed written in a thick pencil difficult to read.

The helpers

The early focus of this article was on the presence or absence of Liberal policies or values in the Lloyd George/Churchill volumes. Frances Stevenson and A. J. Sylvester were closely attached to Lloyd George and supportive of his ideas – but there is no indication that they influenced content at all. The two people who helped most on content, Hankey and Liddell Hart do not reveal themselves in their comments to be interested in Liberal issues.

When he began to prepare to write his memoirs in 1922 he took on Major General Swinton to find material for him and comment on the technical, particularly military aspects on which he was writing; Swinton was to be paid £2000. Swinton completed a set of chapters by 1925 covering the whole war, some of which were used in the *War Memoirs*. His chapter on the financial crisis stands practically unaltered, apart from minor editorial changes and some characteristic anecdotes about Lord Cunliffe and Lord Rothschild.

General Edmunds of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, who had helped Churchill on *The World Crisis,* also helped. Liddell Hart was however the main military expert throughout all the volumes. Specific advice on naval matters was received from Admiral Richmond, and also from a number of ex-governmental colleagues and others with specific knowledge.

It is clear that, once the *War Memoirs* were properly underway in 1932, there were three people working directly on producing material for him: Frances Stevenson, A. J. Sylvester and Malcolm Thomson. (Churchill had no equivalent helpers of this kind on his staff.)

Frances' diaries tell us when work started and how many words Lloyd George had written or dictated. Her involvement with the *War Memoirs* started before LG left for Ceylon in 1931, when she and Malcolm Thomson prepared material for the first volume. On 29 March 1934 Frances Stevenson reports that there was trouble over the final draft of his book. He was 'incapable of achieving anything without reducing all around him to nervous wrecks.'[36] In her autobiography, she noted: 'My own copy of the Memoirs is inscribed on the flyleaf in LG's hand writing "To Frances, without whose sympathetic help and understanding I could not have carried through the burden of the terrible tasks whose stories are related in these volumes. D Lloyd George" '.[37] (The formal signature is interesting – not David, D or Taid.) Lloyd George used an extract from her diary for 19 October 1915, but said it was a note made by a secretary. He also quoted from her diary for 30 November 1915, pretending on this occasion that it was part of something he himself had written.

Sylvester interviewed people and sorted out papers. He complained that he was the only person who was not getting anything extra for work on the book (unlike Frances and one other person, presumably Thomson). He made a further bitter comment later when LG said ' "JT (Davies) and Frances are the only people who know the papers" which is absolute balls. Frances only knows the papers when they are asked for by him and then they are only there because they were sent there by me from London. I said nothing, but thought a lot.'[38] There are far more references by Sylvester to the detail of Lloyd George's work on the *War Memoirs* than Frances makes in her diaries. Sylvester needed to record for at least his own satisfaction the extent to which he contributed, whereas Frances had no doubt how important she was to Lloyd George, and was less involved in the detail.

A number of people were asked to comment, including LG's brother William who was upset by LG's attacks on Sir Edward Grey, foreign secretary between 1905 and 1916. LG responded that Grey 'was quite futile in any enterprise that demanded decision and energy', but 'I made certain alterations in my draft and I send it along to you and I shall be very glad if you would give me your opinion'.[39]

Hankey, cabinet secretary during and since the war, was a major influence. He had been the prime mover in trying to prevent Churchill's use of official documents for *The World Crisis*, and had initiated the discussion of the proposed rule about the use of such papers. However, by 1933 he had given up the attempt to control the use of papers, although he occasionally suggested there were serious reasons for deleting passages which could affect the conduct of government. In fact, Lloyd George had access to more material than Churchill in 1923. So far from preventing the use of cabinet papers Hankey actually facilitated it by opening the way for Sylvester to review material not already in Lloyd George's own files. His second role was to correct any factual mistakes, on which Lloyd George generally gave way.

Hankey prepared notes on personalities, issues and policies, and his third and most delicate role was to try and get some of the criticisms of other people toned down, both because he sometimes thought such criticisms unfair but also because,

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he said, the criticisms sometimes reflected badly through their exaggerated nature on Lloyd George's own judgement. He wrote (on pink paper!) that the attacks on personalities were sometimes too strong – such as about Churchill – and the acerbities were toned down. The vitriol about generals was also diluted – but not about Haig.

Hankey had two motivations for involvement. First he wanted to get a more accurate history of the First World War than that provided so far by other participants. The second was his strong belief in Lloyd George's virtues as a war leader.

The role of Captain Basil Liddell Hart was wide ranging. After several conversations with LG about various military personalities and actions, he was approached in April 1933 (by Hankey) to see if he would take on the task of vetting LG's *War Memoirs*, and was delighted to accept. He left the decision on a fee to Lloyd George and does not tell us what fee was agreed for his work on this and later volumes.

He was sent drafts and returned them with his comments and then went to discuss those comments with Lloyd George. 'Its presentation in final form was his own, but I saw so much of the process of composition at close quarters, over several years, as to appreciate that it deviated far less from the trend of the evidence than most of the memoirs produced by statesmen and soldiers, while providing a much more solid basis of factual evidence on the great decisions.'[40] If they had arguments, they were usually about the manner of presentation rather than on the main strategic issues. 'I remember him standing on the staircase at Bron-y-de, and shouting down at me "who is writing these memoirs – you or I?" '[41] Hart reports an occasion where Lloyd George had demolished a point of view presented in John Buchan's book about the First World War but continued the demolition job long after it was necessary. Hart's suggestion that this should be reduced in length was supported by Megan Lloyd George who was also present. Passages were cut in the final version. There was much more scrutiny by Hankey, Hart and others of drafts of the *War Memoirs* than Churchill received for *The World Crisis*; comments went to Lloyd George who decided what to do with them. Together with the detailed record by his secretaries of his direct dictation and writing, it is clear Lloyd George was indeed the author.

Clearance

There had been no precedent for Churchill's use of official papers for *The World Crisis*. The precedent he set for Lloyd George was partial in the sense that Churchill was a cabinet minister whereas Lloyd George was prime minister.

Both Churchill and Lloyd George took with them and quoted extensively from minutes, memoranda and telegrams and other documents. In January 1922 the cabinet reversed its previous decision and allowed minsters to 'indicate their actions against misrepresentation by publishing the necessary documents'. The proviso was that no one was entitled to make public use of cabinet documents without the permission of the king. The general point about including direct quotations was stated in principle eventually by Ramsay MacDonald as prime minister – that access to records was fine but verbatim public quotation of cabinet minutes was not justified. Lloyd George slid round this by making them look less like direct quotations. The arrangement became that Baldwin on behalf of the government trusted that Hankey would have influenced Lloyd George to produce an acceptable version.

Hankey in fact arrived at a position others might have found impossible. His circulation of chapter drafts to relevant departments is not controversial. But he was advising Lloyd George on the content of the *War Memoirs*, while also acting as the conduit through which Lloyd George's eventual final drafts were submitted to Baldwin and King George V. Baldwin wrote to Lloyd George on 19 April 1933, 'I read every word – carefully, and with the greatest interest. … I agreed with Hankey that there is no publication to which exception could be taken.'[42] Hankey, at the request of George V's secretary, gained the excision of the comments about what should be done with the tsar in 1917. LG had promised to defer to Hankey on questions of national interests 'without demur'. But he did not tone down what he said about MacDonald's actions during the war, despite George V's objections.

Part of Hankey's help was acknowledged. 'These documents I have chosen and quoted or used with a full sense of the responsibility resting on every public servant not to reveal or publish anything which may injure the interests of his country. In the exercise of this discretion I owe much to the scrutiny of one of the most efficient and distinguished public servants of his generation – Sir Maurice Hankey.'[43]

The first two volumes were on the whole well received. While recognising that they were Lloyd George's version of incidents, opinions and events, he was complimented on a vivid display of interesting material. Volumes III and IV received more criticism, particularly regarding his bitterness about people who disagreed with him during the war, when in his view he was always right.

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Volumes III and IV received more criticism, particularly regarding his bitterness about people who disagreed with him during the war, when in his view he was always right. Frances however, registered, 'An amazing press. … D very pleased because for the first time there is a general deference to his literary ability'.[44]

Lloyd George felt guilt about not preventing Passchendale. Volume IV contained his fiercest criticisms of British generals, especially Haig and Robertson, and received equivalent defensive responses from supporters of those generals. There was criticism because they were not alive to defend themselves. Lloyd George,

characteristically combative, regretted that they were not alive actually to read his volumes and see what he thought.

A reviewer of the final volume (the fourth) wrote, 'It is indeed amazing that a man … in his 70th year should have written a million words, every letter … stamped with his own personality. Our literature knows nothing like it since Macaulay…'.[45]

In many ways the most interesting reviewer was Winston Churchill in the *Daily Mail*. His comments were more favourable than otherwise, particularly in complimenting Lloyd George on his focus on winning the war. They were of course in accord on the alternative strategy to trench warfare on the Western Front. Churchill ventured into literary criticism on Volume II: 'There is a certain lack of design and structure about this new volume.' He comments that needless liberties were taken with chronology. However, it was 'A Volume which in its scope, fertility, variety, and interest decidedly surpasses its predecessor'. Written as it was with a 'lucid and unpretentious style', the volume was 'set off by many shrewd turns of homely wit and a continual flow of happy and engaging imagery'.[46] These condescending remarks were unlikely to have been well received by Lloyd George.

Churchill registered his disagreements over what he saw as Lloyd George's misjudgement over Russia, Nivelle and Passchendale, while strangely, accepting that LG could not have prevented them. Churchill's overall comment on volume IV was 'This monumental work may not be literature but it is certainly History.'[47] The focus on Passchendale (on which Churchill had written little) is noted – over 300 pages on this. (This can be compared with 242 pages on the Dardanelles in *The World Crisis*.)

Aftermath

Churchill published his fifth volume, *The Aftermath*, in March 1929. This was the story from the end of the world war to the prospect – fortunately not, in the event, the actuality – of a war with Turkey over Chanak. His title is used here for comments about the longer-term results of these two sets of writing about the First World War. None of the authors or reviewers encountered during research for this article commented on the Liberal perspective from which Churchill or Lloyd George might have been acting and later writing, as outlined at the beginning of this article. Either they did not see this as an important aspect of these works, or it did not occur to them at all.

These two memoirs changed the content and basis of political memoirs. They were both longer than previous ministerial autobiographies – and only the Moneypenny and Buckle biography of Disraeli was as lengthy. As well as using official papers more extensively, they offered a view of the shambles and awfulness of the strategy on the Western Front which challenged – as they had done at the time – that strategy and its implications, especially in lives lost without benefit. The portraits drawn of participants were, for that time, unusually revelatory – if at times, by LG, close to malice. His version helped create the perception that the land war had been mismanaged by 'stupid Generals'.

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The World Crisis produced a later consequence of great significance for Lloyd George's *War Memoirs* because the attempt by Hankey to prevent the use of official papers failed. Churchill's horse bolted through a partially opened door, and Hankey did not attempt to close the door later to the Lloyd George horse.

The desire (in Churchill's case the imperative) to earn money was achieved. No total sales figures have been published for Churchill. Payments in advance from his publishers and newspaper for serialisation produced £47,000 – over £1 million in today's money.[48] There may have been additional royalties. Sales for Lloyd George's six volumes fell from 12,707 for volume I to 5,819 for volume VI: the total was 53,637. By October 1944, sales of the two-volume version were 286,429.[49] He earned around £65,000[50] and was delighted to know he had done better than Churchill. This was estimated to be worth £2.4 million at 2010 values.[51] (If he had gone ahead in 1922 he had been guaranteed £90,000 and his agent forecast £137,000.) There was no suggestion this time of giving the money to charities.

Biographies generally sustain or demolish the reputation of their subjects. Malcolm Thomson – who had worked for Lloyd George on the *War Memoirs* – was his official biographer and the first one to give an account of how the memoirs were written. [52] Rowland, Owen, and Tom Jones also repeat the Bruce Lockhart version.[53] Surprisingly, Hattersley does not refer at all to how the volumes were written.[54] Crosby, the most recent biographer, says very little about the memoirs.[55] Suttie wrote a critical, but balanced appraisal of the memoirs especially the 'alternative strategy' but does not comment on how it was written.[56]

Churchill has been the subject of many biographies and studies of his literary style and method of writing. Reynolds on the Second World War[57] and Clarke on Churchill's *History of the English Speaking Peoples*[58] provide evidence on his method of writing these later books. Ashley's description of how Churchill wrote is based on his direct experience of working with him on his book on Marlborough, but cannot be taken as evidence on how he wrote *The World Crisis*.[59]

Two, more unfavourable assessments have been made. Jenkins devoted a complete chapter 'A Relentless Writer' to Churchill's books including *The World Crisis* and is critical of Churchill's partial (in both senses) use of documents.[60] Robin Prior wrote a damaging critique of *The World Crisis*.[61] Not only did he disagree with some of Churchill's actions during the war and

conclusions about decisions and strategies during it, but he also criticised the way in which Churchill had supported his arguments during the book. These criticisms specifically were about the overuse of Churchill's own memoranda, which clearly supported whatever case he was making in the book, and the absence of contemporary replies or differences of view. In some cases, Prior found that papers had not, as Churchill claimed, been reproduced in full meaningful entirety and that parts had been eliminated which affected the strength or otherwise of Churchill's case.

Ramsden writes mainly about the memoirs of the Second World War, but includes Churchill telling Ashley, on the writing of *English Speaking Peoples*, 'Give me the facts Ashley and I will twist them the way I want to suit my argument.' Ramsden writes that although this was 'clearly a joke, it was like many good jokes, one that diverted attention away from the truth'.[62]

In the longer term, *The World Crisis* became a source for arguments about decisions made in the First World War. Historians agreed or disagreed with Churchill's facts or conclusions, or compared his account with those of others. Since there was no other published account by a senior British cabinet minister for many years, his version continued to be accepted as both a good version of history and 'a good read'. Churchill's general literary reputation was further enhanced with his book on Marlborough and his account of the Second World War, although not by his *History of the English Speaking Peoples*.

Lloyd George's vivid *War Memoirs* have similarly been used in arguments about strategy and his contribution as 'the man who won the War'. His unsparing, detailed denunciation of Haig was criticised by Haig's defenders but generally was accepted for a long time. Haig has received more balanced assessments more recently.

Lloyd George produced an abridged version in two volumes in 1938. He asserted he had checked his first edition in the light of public criticisms; his response was 'After a careful perusal of this fresh material I have not found it necessary to revise or correct any of the assertions I have made or opinions I expressed in the original narrative.'[63] (See earlier for Churchill's similar claim).

The initial popularity of both versions of his *War Memoirs* has not been sustained. There has been no republication or paperback version.

Churchill's literary style

Early reviews of *The World Crisis* commented primarily on content, but later books have included more criticisms of his literary style as overdramatic and rhetorical. Churchill read and initially approved of Macaulay but later disliked his view of history. He was also a devotee of Gibbon, whose style is to a significant extent reflected in Churchill's writing, which was always full of colour; but that colour could also be described as florid. His oratory reflected his literary style, and his writing reflected his oratory. This is not surprising because, after the handwritten early books, *The World Crisis* was the result of dictation. The words pour out; he is the Dylan Thomas of writers about the First World War – essentially an adjectival writer. However, these are the remarks of the author of this article written in 2016 in a context wholly different from the reception Churchill's volumes received in the 1920s.

A different kind of comment was made by the award to Churchill of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953. He was not very interested in the award, which was given to him for his mastery of historical and biographical description as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values. *The World Crisis* was given only a brief mention as part of the justification for the award. The award stands as an oddity in the company of awards to, for example, Kipling, Shaw, and T. S. Eliot – but is less odd than some Nobel Peace Prizes.

There has been no equivalent analysis of Lloyd George's style. Readers continue no doubt both to enjoy and be scandalised by his vividly antagonistic descriptions of the generals, and of Grey and McKenna. An otherwise critical historian comments that his 'skills of an unsurpassed political orator and an accomplished journalist had been translated successfully to the medium of the memoir'.[64]

A view of premierships in war

These memoirs contributed, as intended, to the reputation of the authors. Comparison of the extent to which they were successful as wartime prime ministers continues to spark debate. One aspect of that comparison not previously made is revealed in this study of their books on the First World War. Lloyd George as prime minster continued his involvement as a Liberal in issues other than purely military actions. This broader concept of what a wartime prime minster should concern himself with provides a different view of a leader in war. Churchill's priorities in the Second World War were, as his *World Crisis* showed earlier, focused on military problems, not on the home front – but by then he was no longer a Liberal.

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Alan Mumford is a historian on political cartoons. His most recent book is David Lloyd George: A biography in cartoons.

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Archive sources

Churchill Archives Centre

Liberal archives at the Churchill Archives Centre at Cambridge by **Dr J. Graham Jones**

The Churchill Archives Centre was purpose-built in 1973 to house Sir Winston Churchill's papers – some 3,000 boxes of letters and documents ranging from his first childhood letters, via his great wartime speeches, to the writings which earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature. They form an incomparable documentary treasure trove.

The Churchill Papers served as the inspiration and the starting point for a larger endeavour – the creation of a wide-ranging archive of the Churchill era and after, covering those fields of public life in which Sir Winston played a personal role or took a personal interest. Today the centre holds the papers of almost 600 important figures and the number is still growing. Contemporaries of Winston Churchill, including friends and family, sit alongside major political, military and scientific figures like Margaret Thatcher, Ernest Bevin, John Major, Neil Kinnock, Admiral Ramsay, Field Marshal Slim, Frank Whittle and Rosalind Franklin.

The following archival collections would be of interest to students of the Liberal Party:

Broadwater collection

Churchill family photograph albums and press-cutting books, and other

papers relating to the Churchill family, 1803–1973
BRDW 90 albums and 20 boxes

Includes: Churchill family photograph albums and press-cutting books, with photographs of Churchill and his family throughout his life, and press-cuttings covering Churchill's political, military and literary career; some papers relating to Lord Randolph Churchill; papers relating to Lady Randolph Churchill, particularly scripts for various plays which she wrote, and albums from the hospital ship, Maine, during the Boer War; papers relating to Winston Churchill, including public and private correspondence and various historical items which were given to him; photographs of Clementine Churchill; albums kept by 'Jack' Churchill relating to his service in the Oxfordshire Hussars.

Churchill Archives Centre holds the papers of Sir Winston Churchill (references GBR/014/CHAR and GBR/014/CHUR) plus a range of related archive collections. These include the papers of Churchill's wife, Clementine Spencer-Churchill, those of his son Randolph, the family of his brother Jack, press photographs, press cuttings and additional Churchill material (GBR/014/WCHL).

Churchill Archives Centre also has a microfilm copy of Churchill's Prime Ministerial Office papers, 1940–45 (Public Record Office classes PREM 3 and PREM 4) and holds the papers of several people whose careers were closely linked with Churchill, such as Sir John Colville, Sir George Harvie-Watt, and Sir John Martin.

Dilke family archive

DILKE, Ashton Wentworth (1850–83), Liberal MP; journalist, writer on Russia.

DILKE, Charles Wentworth (1789–1864), editor and critic.

DILKE, Sir Charles Wentworth, 1st Bt (1810–69), organiser of the 1851 and 1862 exhibitions.

DILKE, Rt Hon. Sir Charles Wentworth, 2nd Bt (1843–1911), Liberal MP; Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1880–82; author.
Correspondence and papers.

REND 9 boxes

The purpose of this archive is to bring together in convenient form papers concerning the two chief actors in perhaps the most notorious politico-social drama of the nineteenth century – namely the two law suits involving Right Hon. Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Bart, MP (1843–1911) and Mrs Virginia Mary Crawford (1863–1948) the wife of Donald Crawford, MP. The first of the two cases was Crawford's petition for divorce from Virginia Crawford in which he cited Charles W-D as co-respondent.

For reasons given by CWD's counsel which now seem ill-advised, he did not go into the witness box at the trial. The second and more sensational trial took place when, at CWD's request, the Queen's Proctor intervened to show reason why the divorce decree granted to Crawford should not be made absolute. This trial took place in an atmosphere already poisoned against CWD by W. T. Stead and others, and in it CWD was denied legal representation. He was subjected to a very rigorous cross-examination by Henry Mathews, appearing for Crawford, and proved an extremely bad witness. The intervention by the Queen's Proctor was unsuccessful, and so CWD's name was not cleared – as had been his object.

The political interest in the above cases lies chiefly in the fact that, but for the success of Donald Crawford in obtaining a divorce from VMC and the subsequent failure of CWD to establish his innocence, CWD could well have succeeded Gladstone as leader of the Liberal Party, and would then have been likely to become prime minister instead of Campbell-Bannerman in 1905.

But the divorce cases also provide the background for an interesting study in late-nineteenth-century social history and mores; and it is partly for this reason that it has been thought worth while to bring these papers together. It should however be made plain that, although the papers throw interesting light on the background, upbringing and character of both CWD and VMC, the student who may hope to find here the long-sought answer to the question 'Which was the guilty (or guiltier) party?' will be disappointed.

FOOT, Rt Hon. Sir Dingle Mackintosh (1905–78)

Liberal and Labour MP; Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic Warfare, 1940–45; Solicitor General, 1964–67.
Political, legal and personal papers, 1925–78.
DGFT 49 boxes

The material held at Churchill Archives Centre deals with Sir Dingle's career as a Liberal and then a Labour member of parliament, as well as with his distinguished position in the legal profession, particularly with regard to Commonwealth countries, and with his literary skills.

GLADWYN, Hubert Miles Gladwyn Jebb, 1st Baron (1900–96)

Diplomat. Private Secretary to the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Foreign Office, 1937–40; Ambassador to France, 1954–60; MEP, 1973–76; President of the European Movement; Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords, and Liberal Spokesman on Foreign Affairs and Defence, 1965–88.
Diplomatic, personal and political papers, 1875–2002.
GLAD 103 boxes

The material at Churchill Archives Centre begins with Lord Gladwyn's school and college notebooks, and runs to his final articles, but with the exception of his personal and family correspondence, was chiefly created after Lord Gladwyn's retirement from the Diplomatic Service. A large proportion of the papers consists of notes, reports, articles, speeches and correspondence amassed from Lord Gladwyn's work as the deputy leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Lords and Liberal spokesman on foreign affairs and defence (1965–88), his place on parliamentary delegations to the Council of Europe and WEU Assemblies (1966–73), and particularly his work as a member of the European Parliament and vice-president of the European Parliament Political Committee (1973–76). The collection also includes photographs, press cuttings and other material from his time as British Ambassador to France.

There is also a large amount of literary material, including research notes, interviews, and drafts of Lord Gladwyn's works, chiefly on European affairs and defence and also a series of diaries and notebooks from 1929–95.

The papers also include the memoirs of Irene Hunter, Lord Gladwyn's

secretary, under Gladwyn Associated. Although these memoirs cover Mrs Hunter's whole career, they do include reminiscences of her work for Lord Gladwyn while he was British Representative to the United Nations and British Ambassador in Paris, and also after his retirement from 1968 onwards.

HORE-BELISHA, Isaac Leslie, 1st Baron (1893–1957)
Conservative MP; Minister of Transport, 1934–37; Secretary of State for War, 1937–40.
Letters and diaries, mainly relating to work as Minister of Transport and Secretary of State for War.
HOBE 11 boxes

The collection, though small, is interesting as no other papers appear to have been left by Hore-Belisha. It comprises letters, diaries, some photographs and documents (mainly copies) covering most of Hore-Belisha's career but concentrating on his most important position as War Minister from 1937–39 and particularly the events surrounding his dismissal by Neville Chamberlain.

McKENNA, Reginald (1863–1943)
Liberal MP; President of the Board of Education, 1907–08; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1908–11; Home Secretary, 1911–15; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1915–16.
Personal and political papers and correspondence and family papers, 1883–1994.
MCKN 52 boxes

The collection includes: personal papers, particularly on McKenna's property and financial affairs; a small amount of material on the 1907 education bill; a large amount of correspondence and papers from McKenna's tenure as First Lord of the Admiralty; some Home Office correspondence; speeches and correspondence from McKenna's time as Chancellor of the Exchequer; correspondence with Admiral of the Fleet 1st Lord Fisher; papers on McKenna's career following his departure from politics, particularly relating to his chairmanship of Midland Bank and of a war reparations committee; correspondence between the McKennas and their immediate family; personal and general correspondence between the McKennas and their friends and colleagues; a small amount of election material; photographs, political cartoons and press cuttings; Pamela McKenna's travel journals and diaries.

Saunders family

SAUNDERS, David Hogg (d.1904)
Member of Liberal Party.
Political and social correspondence, 1862–1904.

SAUNDERS, George (1859–1922)
Journalist; Berlin and Paris correspondent of The Times, 1897–1914.
Correspondence, 1872–1922.

SAUNDERS, miscellaneous family members
Correspondence, 1858–1922.

SAUN 11 boxes.

The Saunders Family Papers fall into three main groups: the correspondence of David Hogg Saunders; the letters and papers of his son, George, whose hostility towards German militarism is reflected in his private letters, providing a great deal of information about life and manners in contemporary Berlin; and a variety of letters and miscellaneous documents relating to members of the Saunders family. This third group comprises the correspondence between George's sister, Margaret, his son, Malcolm, and other members of the Saunders family. It is by no means confined to domestic affairs, since they all maintained a lively interest in politics and history.

SPEARS, Major-General Sir Edward Louis (1886–1974)
Liberal and Unionist MP; liaison officer with the French Army, First World War; Prime Minister's Personal Representative to French Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, May–June 1940; Head of British Mission to General de Gaulle, June 1940; Head of Spears Mission, Syria and the Lebanon, July 1941; First Minister to Republics of Syria and the Lebanon, 1942–44; Chairman of Institute of Directors, 1954–65.
Military, political and literary papers, 1847–1989.
SPRS 340 boxes

The papers include: correspondence; domestic and personal papers; early family correspondence, particularly among ELS's mother's relatives; diaries, including ELS's journals as a liaison officer with the French from the First

World War and as Head of the British Mission to de Gaulle during the Second World War; some political papers and military maps; speeches and articles; manuscripts of books and short stories, with literary correspondence and original and copied source material from Spears's work as Churchill's personal representative to the French Government in 1940; press cuttings; family photographs; business papers, mainly relating to ELS's chairmanship of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation and the Institute of Directors.

The archive also includes the papers of ELS's first wife, Mary Borden, particularly her correspondence with ELS, and her letters and diaries relating to her First World War hospital and the work of the Hadfield-Spears Mobile Hospital Unit during the Second World War.

THURSO, Archibald Henry Macdonald Sinclair, 1st Viscount (1890–1970)
Leader of the Liberal Party, 1935–45; Secretary of State for Scotland, 1931–32; Secretary of State for Air, 1940–45.

Includes papers, 1913–63; political correspondence, 1923–39; Scottish Office correspondence, 1923–36.
THRS 223 boxes

The collection held at Churchill Archives Centre includes correspondence (including general, official, political, constituency, parliamentary and family correspondence); speeches; Liberal Organisation and Scottish Liberal organisation and Federation material; press cuttings; business papers; and Scottish Office, Scottish Board of Health and Secretary of State for Scotland material.

For the most part, the collection is made up of constituency, parliamentary and Liberal Party correspondence of the 1920s and 1930s. There is very little wartime material but Section IV contains correspondence (arranged alphabetically by correspondents' names) and press cuttings from 1945 on into the 1950s. The papers transferred from the Scottish Record Office form a separate and coherent group, consisting of papers of 1923–37 relating to the Scottish Office, the Scottish Board of Health and Thurso's period as Secretary of State for Scotland. The papers in the first box of Section I are also particularly noteworthy as they include Thurso's correspondence with Winston Churchill from 1915 to 1920.

Contact details
Churchill Archives Centre is open from Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm. A prior appointment and two forms of identification are required.

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Reviews

The Pact

Jonathan Kirkup, *The Lib–Lab Pact – A Parliamentary Agreement, 1977–78* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)
Review by **Michael Meadowcroft**

The first thing to say about this book is that it is an important addition to modern British political history. Following the enabling of access to the crucial parliamentary documents in 2008, under the thirty-year rule, a mature assessment of this political episode has become possible and full marks should go to Jonathan Kirkup for undertaking it. However, it soon becomes evident from the style and structure of the book that it derives from an academic thesis. A little research does indeed show that the Dr Kirkup completed a PhD in 2012 on this subject. Clearly it is perfectly legitimate to use all one's detailed academic research to produce a book on the same subject, but it should be in a very different style. A book is a narrative and a thesis is an academic exercise. The book's editor should have insisted on stylistic changes but then, given more than a score of typographical errors, more could also have been expected from such a reputable publisher as Palgrave Macmillan. Quite apart from annoying misspellings and errors of date perhaps someone can explain what the following comment means, on industrial democracy in the Post Office:

> [I]n some ways this issue encapsulates one of the structural problems of a parliamentary arrangement only the lines of the Pact.

Also the author twice calls the Joseph-Rowntree-Reform-Trust-funded, and politically independent, Outer Circle Policy Unit, the 'Liberal Outer Policy Unit'.

However, setting these solecisms and its overly academic style aside, this is an important book and the best analysis and commentary on the pact and on what was certainly an interesting period. The Liberal Party's response to the pact's formation in March 1977 was singularly different from the reaction to Jeremy Thorpe's discussions with Edward Heath on the possibility of a

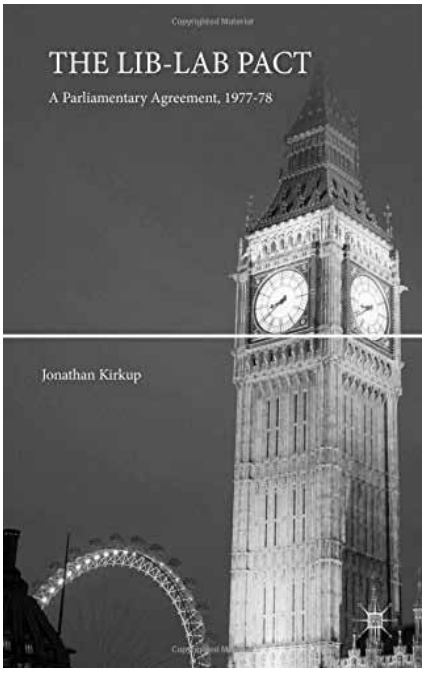
Liberal–Conservative coalition after the 1970 general election. In 1970 my telephone went berserk with furious calls from Yorkshire Liberals protesting at Thorpe's action, whereas in 1977 I had just one worried enquirer. The difference was both because the party felt itself instinctively to be anti-Conservative – nota bene 2010! – and also because the political situation in 1977 clearly had more potential leverage for us, albeit being also high risk. The pact lasted only for sixteen and a half months, though at the time it seemed much longer; and although there was the inevitable slum in poll ratings, from 13 per cent to 6 per cent during the life of the pact, the ratings returned to 13 per cent in the ten months after its termination leading up to the 1979 general election. Perhaps if the Liberal Democrats had ended the coalition in August 2014 there might have been a corresponding recovery by the 2015 election.

Kirkup shows that, although some of the Liberal spokesmen – Richard Wainwright, for instance – achieved changes in legislation, the results of the pact were visible rather more in what the Liberals had stopped Labour from enacting. It is clear from Kirkup's careful narrative that specific policy achievements were less important to David Steel than the fact of the pact and to the establishment of a formal Joint Consultative Committee between the two parties – an arrangement that was only reluctantly conceded by Jim Callaghan.

The circumstances of the pact are interesting. In a real sense, the felicitous conjunction of the necessary planets at the right moment, coupled with the frailty of the Labour government, enabled the Liberals to grasp the parliamentary arithmetic and also remained crucial to the pact's establishment and continuance. David Steel had been in office as leader for less than nine months, and it is hard to imagine that Jeremy Thorpe would have been capable of taking and seeing through any such initiative. It is also unlikely that had John Pardoe won the Liberal Party leadership election he would have taken the same initiative, though he loyally supported Steel throughout. Also Jim Callaghan had been leader of the Labour Party for only a couple of months longer than Steel's tenure in the Liberal Party, and it is inconceivable that Harold Wilson would have envisaged such a pact for an instant. It was similarly crucial that the machineman Bob Mellish had been replaced recently by the much more personable and astute Michael Cocks as Labour chief whip. The Liberal chief whip, Alan Beith, also a great fixer, had an excellent relationship with Michael Cocks, twisting his arm to move the writ for the by-election in Liverpool Edge Hill at the very last minute to ensure polling day, and a victory for the then Liberal, David Alton, and thus a very much needed boost for the party just thirty-five days before the general election. Kirkup's access to cabinet papers shines a welcome light on the important roles played by Freddie Warren, private secretary to the chief whip, and Kenneth Stowe, the prime minister's principal private secretary. Stowe in particular had Callaghan's full confidence and played a very proactive role in keeping the show on the road.

Under the pact every government department had a Liberal 'shadow.' This inevitably required the use of a number Liberal peers, some of whom – such as Nancy Seear and Desmond Banks – were acknowledged to be knowledgeable and influential. Other partnerships were not as fruitful. Jo Grimond and Tony Benn were hardly soulmates, and I recall Jo regaling colleagues with accounts of their less-than-meaningful sessions. 'We had a note presented of the current energy issues and we had a very pleasant chat about the main ones. We then had mugs of tea and five biscuits and I then left.' Benn was permanently infuriating for Callaghan and Cocks and on occasion had to be threatened with dismissal from his cabinet post. When the confidential draft agreement was circulated and handed back at the end of the meeting, Benn secretly retained his copy. I am reminded of Stephen Wall's comment on Benn in his official history of Britain and the European Community: 'Tony Benn's capacity for disingenuous naiveté was inexhaustible.' Interestingly, party favourite Russell Johnston was regarded as a poor negotiator, which I would attribute to Russell's lack of interest in detail, as opposed to his superb perorations in set speeches.

The issue of proportional representation for the direct elections to the European Parliament looms large throughout the book. Thirty-five years later, with PR (albeit of an inferior variety) adopted by consensus for these elections as well as for the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly and for the London Assembly, it seems rather paltry. It was, however, a totem pole for the pact. In some respects it was a case of an irresistible force



meeting an immovable object. The Liberals were absolutely determined to achieve PR for the MEP elections as an important act in itself but also as a tangible sign of the value of the pact. Callaghan and Foot were equally intransigent on the impossibility of whipping their parliamentary colleagues to support it. The argument still continues as to whether it could have been won by more determination on the part of David Steel. He thought not and his style has always been not to confront the obvious. On the other hand, David Owen and Chris Mayhew, a defector to Liberal from Labour three years before, believed that Labour's fear of being turned out by a Thatcher-led Conservative Party would have made it possible. The most David Steel achieved was an undertaking from Callaghan that he personally would support PR for Europe and state so in advance, thus recommending it to cabinet colleagues and Labour MPs. The key vote in the House was lost by 321 to 224. It was a great disappointment to those who had set so much store on winning it but, in fact, it was a considerable step forward in the eternal struggle for electoral reform. Steel's biggest disappointment was over the lack of Conservative support which, he admits, he was naive in relying on. There was no way in which Conservative MPs were going to do anything to prop up the pact. Even so, sixty-one Conservative MPs did vote for PR.

The pact was very much David Steel's creation and it was always clear that he was going to 'manage' it and to undertake its key negotiations personally, often without any colleague present.

Kirkup's use of official papers exposes more than was known at the time of how far Steel ignored party decisions and votes that were aimed at strengthening his negotiating position. It is recorded that, in his negotiations with the prime minister on the renewal of the pact 'he once again did not raise any of the Party Council or Steering Committee recommendations.' This brings us right to David Steel's relations with his party. These were, alas, consistently bad, not just during the pact but also later during the Liberal–SDP alliance and the negotiations over merger with the SDP. He was permanently exasperated with the party and even put his disparagement with it on record. I am sure that this simply provoked negative reactions from a party that wished cooperate and which those in charge worked hard to make helpful and supportive. Certainly he suffered ill-timed and uncalled for vicious personal attacks from Cyril Smith, supported by David Alton, at the first meeting of the parliamentary party following the 1983 election. Party officers were always conscious of the severe electoral consequences of open disloyalty to the leader and, however provoked and disparaged, they swallowed hard and maintained public solidarity.

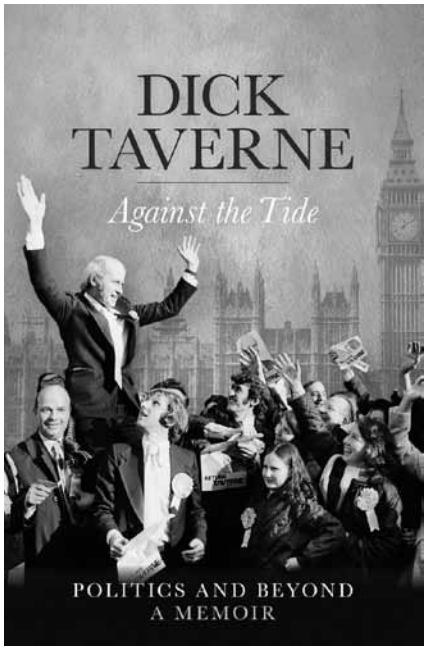
This was apparent at the special Liberal assembly towards the end of the pact. The September 1977 assembly, faced with the impending renegotiation, agreed to leave it to the party president, Gruff Evans, the party chair, Geoff Tordoff, and the assembly chair, myself, to call a special assembly as and when needed. (We inevitably became known as the Three Wise Men and I recall receiving a phone call midway through December when the familiar nasal tones of Clement Freud asked, 'Can I speak to a wise man before Christmas?') We called this assembly for 21 January 1978 and carefully worded the motions for debate to enable the 'for' and 'against' cases to be fully presented and debated. The motion 'for' was carried by more than a two-thirds majority, which was an excellent example of the judgement and maturity of the party when faced with a potentially disastrous open revolt against the party leader. At the time I regarded it as demonstrating why the leader should leave party management to the party officers and should cooperate and accept advice on party matters. This lesson was not learnt as was shown by the debacle of the 1986 Eastbourne defence debate, the alliance struggles and the 1987 merger negotiations, all of which were avoidable.

Jonathan Kirkup is excellent in analysing the special assembly and, particularly, in emphasising the positive role played by Chris Mayhew which was not recognised at the time. Kirkup is right to conclude that, although there were many good things for politics to emanate from the pact, 'Steel's strategy was ultimately flawed,' but he is, however, I think, wrong in his contention that the pact had no effect on future inter-party relations. It established good relations between a number of Liberal and Labour politicians and created Labour respect for a good number of their Liberal counterparts. Lessons from the pact may indeed well have been in mind when, virtually alone of the party's senior figures, David Steel's support for the coalition in 2010 was couched in the shrewdest possible terms: 'The coalition is a business arrangement born of necessity to clear up the country's dire financial debt. It should never be portrayed as anything else.' Had that judgement been heeded we might have avoided the Rose Garden love-in and the back slapping of Osborne's budget performance and maintained a more winsome appeal to the electorate.

Michael Meadowcroft was MP for Leeds West, 1983–87.

The straight line deviationist

Dick Taverne, *Against the Tide* (Biteback Publishing, 2014)
Review by **Tom McNally**



There is an old Polish joke from Poland's era of Communism and Soviet domination. A political commissar is teaching a political education class. 'This', he says, drawing a squiggly line on the blackboard, 'is the Party line'. He then draws a perfectly straight line on the board. 'And these are the deviationists.'

In a way, the joke sums up the story Dick Taverne has to tell in this immensely readable book. With his usual candour, he makes it clear from the start that this is not a standard autobiography or political memoir. It is very sparse about Dick's personal life. Which is a pity, since in many political autobiographies it is the details of the early years which are often the most interesting. Certainly, someone who began life born in a house on stilts in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) in 1928 and ended up nearly seventy years later in the House of Lords has a back story which would be worth telling. But this is not that kind of book. It is a book about ideas. It is a book about some of the ideas Dick has had and how he went about putting those ideas in to practice.

Politics can often be a series of grubby compromises and achieving anything needs a willingness to master the art of the possible. If a political life is to be judged by the high number of great offices of state held, then Dick Taverne has only modest achievements to his name. If a political life is judged by consistency of purpose and principle along with an ability to influence the political weather, then this is a story of solid achievement. It is a book which will be of particular interest to Liberal Democrats who come from the Liberal tradition in our party or who have only ever been Liberal Democrats. For, in telling his story, Dick reminds us of the origins of the SDP in the early attempts to reform and modernise the Labour Party under Hugh Gaitskell and how and where our social democratic roots sprang from and developed. In doing so he reminds us how difficult it has been

for the centre-left in British politics to coalesce around agreed policies.

The result has been, particularly with our first-past-the-post electoral system, the Conservative Party being able to have the lion's share of office in the twentieth century. It is now for a new generation to take up the challenge of how we can provide, for what I am still confident is a (small 'l') liberal country, the political structures and programmes to reflect that liberalism. The agendas of social liberalism and social democracy continue to overlap, yet, like ships which pass in the night, we contrive to miss each other. Between 1997 and 2015 there were parliamentary majorities in both Houses which could have reformed the House of Lords, our constitutional structure and our voting system in a way which would enable elections and parliament to reflect that liberal consensus. Instead the Labour Party's short-termism and petty tribalism leave them and the country with political weather far more bleak for the centre-left than that which caused Dick Taverne to set sail against the tide in 1972.

The book reminds us that the first attempt to break the political mould that kept the centre left in semi-permanent opposition was not the formation of the SDP in 1981, but Taverne standing as Democratic Labour candidate in the by-election he himself caused by resigning as the Labour MP for Lincoln in October 1972. It was one of those events where I know exactly where I was when the announcement was made. I was sitting directly behind Tony Benn on the platform of the Labour Party Conference. I could see Benn shaking with emotion as he denounced Dick in the most apocalyptic terms. It was at that conference I believe that Benn also started the journey from centrist technocrat to left-wing ideologue. Although Dick demonstrated at Lincoln that moderate social democrats could mobilise public support, there were very few within the Labour Party who saw the future of social democracy outside the Labour Party fold. It is now over forty years since the Lincoln by-election and there is a depressing familiarity about the political landscape. A Tory government with a derisory share of the popular vote is able to dominate the political agenda whilst the centre-left is in disarray.

More encouragingly the book is also a reminder that political success is not only measured in terms of offices held or legislation passed. To have been instrumental in founding both the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which has become the 'go to' authority on any changes to tax policy, and Sense about Science are achievements which continue to have an impact on the quality of decision making in their respective fields. I was particularly grateful to the Sense about Science team when, as a minister, I piloted through reform of our draconian libel laws to make easier genuine peer review of scientific ideas and products. So this is not a 'What might have been' story. On the contrary, it is an object lesson on how a political life out of office and out of parliament can be both useful and influential. It is also surprisingly generous about opponents and free of rancour about those who came late to banners Dick first unfurled. Perhaps if Dick had been more willing to tack and trim in his political life he would have gone further; but he would not have had so interesting or inspiring story to tell. Just before Christmas I bumped in to Dick in the Lords. He told me that he was initiating a new campaign on behalf of young refugees who are admitted as unaccompanied children and then, when they reach 18 are deported back to their homeland. I do not know the details of these cases; but I know they could have no better champion than this child born in the Dutch East Indies who came to Britain as war loomed in Europe and stayed to become an influence for good in our political life.

Among his many talents Dick is a skilled sailor. A few years ago when he was well in to his seventies I saw him in the Lords Lobby one Monday morning. 'Do anything interesting at the weekend?' I asked. 'Oh, Janice and I went sailing – to Norway!' was the reply. Janice is Dick's wife. They have been married for over sixty years and one gets the impression that she has been very important to him weathering many a storm. 'Against the tide' is thus an apt title for a book which looks at politics and life beyond as seen by one who even in his eighty-eighth year shows no sign of seeking calmer waters.

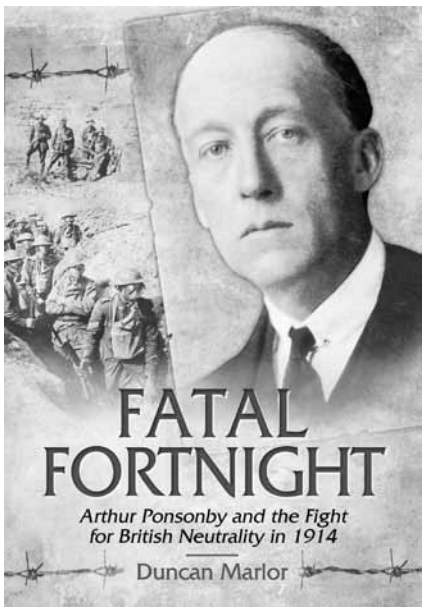
Tom McNally was MP for Stockport South (Labour 1979–81, SDP 1981–83). He became a member of the House of Lords in 1995, led the Liberal Democrat peers from 2004 to 2013 and served as Minister of State for Justice in the coalition government from 2010 to 2013.

Alternative to war

Duncan Marlor, *Fatal Fortnight: Arthur Ponsonby and the Fight for British Neutrality in 1914* (Frontline Books, 2014)
Review by **Dr Chris Cooper**

The centenary of the outbreak of the First World War has witnessed a new wave of publications. One could be forgiven for asking whether another study of July and August 1914 can add anything noteworthy to what is already a well-trodden field. Duncan Marlor, however, deserves credit for finding an original angle, focusing upon the efforts of backbench MPs to keep Britain out of the emerging European war. As is well known, John Burns and John Morley resigned from Asquith's cabinet when Britain entered the war and Labour leaders Ramsay MacDonald and Keir Hardie were prominent backbench critics of it. But Marlor reveals a broader anti-war feeling. The focal point of his study, Arthur Ponsonby, 1st Baron Ponsonby of Shulbrede (1871–1946), was one of several dozen Radical Liberal and Labour MPs who provided an ultimately unsuccessful resistance to Britain's involvement in the conflict. Sir Edward Grey delivered his celebrated speech in favour of British intervention on 3 August 1914, following the German government's ultimatum demanding their army's free passage through Belgium. But little attention has been paid to the chorus of MPs who spoke in the debate after the Foreign Secretary's appeal. As Marlor notes, the curious absence from the historical record of these impassioned pleas for British neutrality 'would do credit to Kremlin air-brushers' (p. xiv).

Ponsonby grew up in Windsor Castle, serving as Queen Victoria's Page of Honour before being educated at Eton and Balliol, Oxford. He had a fine political pedigree and could draw upon six years' experience working in Britain's diplomatic service and two years in the



Foreign Office. He was the son of one of Victoria's principal private secretaries and the great grandson of Earl Grey, the Whig prime minister credited with the passage of the Great Reform Act of 1832. After leaving the Foreign Office in 1902 he became secretary of the Liberal Central Association until being defeated as the Liberal candidate for Taunton in the 1906 general election. He then became principal private secretary to the prime minister, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and, after the latter's death in 1908, he succeeded him as Liberal MP for Stirling Burghs following a by-election.

Though born into the aristocracy, Ponsonby was 'no mindless hooray-Henry', establishing himself on 'the progressive wing of the Liberal Party' (pp. 9–10). Once in parliament, he soon ruffled the establishment's feathers by voting against the king's proposed visit to his Russian cousin, Tsar Nicholas. What's more, this aristocratic radical did not share the belief of Winston Churchill and others that the Liberal Party should attack socialism. Indeed, Ponsonby, a keen social reformer, wanted to work with the fledgling Labour Party and regarded socialism as an ideal to work towards. He also had a progressive approach to foreign affairs opposing the arms race and notions of the balance of power. Ponsonby 'wanted to see ministers more accountable on foreign policy and the processes of the Foreign Office less secretive' (p. 38). He became the chairman of the unofficial backbench Liberal Foreign Affairs Committee in 1913. This ginger group numbering around eighty members was increasingly concerned about the extent of Britain's commitments through the entente with France and, most worryingly for Liberal Radicals, tsarist Russia.

It was through this committee that Ponsonby toiled to secure Britain's neutrality as the attention of MPs shifted from potential conflict in Ireland to Britain's possible involvement in a full-scale continental war. The unfolding events during the 'fatal fortnight' from 27 July to 6 August allow Marlor to develop his consistent charge against Britain's leaders in general and Sir Edward Grey in particular: that British policy was undemocratic, with members of the cabinet and parliament being kept in the dark regarding the extent of Britain's commitments to her entente partners. Marlor contends that both Grey and Haldane, the war minister until 1912, 'developed the Entente into what amounted to an implicit military alliance with France behind the backs of most of the cabinet' (p.19). Indeed, this policy 'was that of the Government but not of the backbenchers whose votes kept it in power' (pp. 65–66).

The position of Ponsonby's backbench committee was made clear on 29 July. Ponsonby, wanting a commitment to neutrality from the government, sent the committee's resolution to the foreign secretary which maintained that 'in no conceivable circumstances should [Britain] depart from a position of strict neutrality' (p.45). Marlor's analysis shows that, had German leaders decided to respect Belgian neutrality, Asquith's government might have collapsed or at least needed to be fundamentally restructured, as the cabinet and the Liberal Party were deeply divided over whether to support France and, by association, autocratic Russia. Many Liberals were keen, like William Glynn Gladstone, grandson of the celebrated prime minister, to 'let them [the powers of Europe] fight it out by themselves' (p. 82). But the consciences of the majority of both the cabinet and Liberal MPs were swayed by the crass German ultimatum to Belgium. Belgian resistance was, for so many, the game changer. Neutralists, from both the Labour and Liberal parties, were reduced, by Ponsonby's estimation, to only twenty or thirty MPs. He lamented the turn of events noting, 'I really feel almost as if the world were coming to an end' (p. 91).

Though unable to prevent Britain's possibly inevitable drift into war, the anti-war campaign culminated in the formation of the Union of Democratic Control, of which Ponsonby was a co-founder in late 1914. The group called for a negotiated peace and, more generally, wanted politics to be more democratic and conducted more openly. Significantly, the group helped bring Radical Liberal and Labour MPs together. With many of the anti-war MPs, such as Ponsonby, losing their seats in 1918, the Liberal Party was gravely damaged by the war and prominent Radical Liberals, including Ponsonby, migrated to the Labour Party. After losing Dunfermline as an 'Independent Democrat' in the 1918 general election, Ponsonby served as Labour MP for Sheffield Brightside from 1922 until he accepted a peerage in 1930. After his defection, he held a number of junior ministerial posts and, more prominently, became Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords.

Marlor's study makes good use of archival sources including the private papers and diaries of those connected to the Liberal backbench committee, as well as a large collection of secondary sources. The contributions to parliamentary debates of those involved in the anti-war movement are noted in detail, though the lack of minutes from the Ponsonby-led committee is frustrating, despite Marlor's attempts to reconstruct the discussions of key meetings through other sources. A more fundamental concern with this study is the role of Ponsonby himself. His speech in the Commons on 3 August was uninspiring and he never emerged as leader of the

Future History Group meetings

- Monday 3 July, National Liberal Club: **The leadership of Charles Kennedy**, with Greg Hurst and Dick Newby (see back page for full details).
- September, Liberal Democrat conference, Bournemouth: joint meeting with the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors, marking the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Association of Liberal Councillors; details to be announced.
- January/February 2017: History Group AGM and speaker meeting; details to be announced.

anti-war movement. Ponsonby is absent from large sections of the book and other Radical Liberals such as Charles Trevelyan and Phillip Morrell seem at least as important. Thus the subject of this biography is not quite as central to the surrounding story as Marlor might wish. Indeed, Trevelyan, after he resigned as a junior minister following Britain's declaration of war, assumed the leadership of the backbench committee.

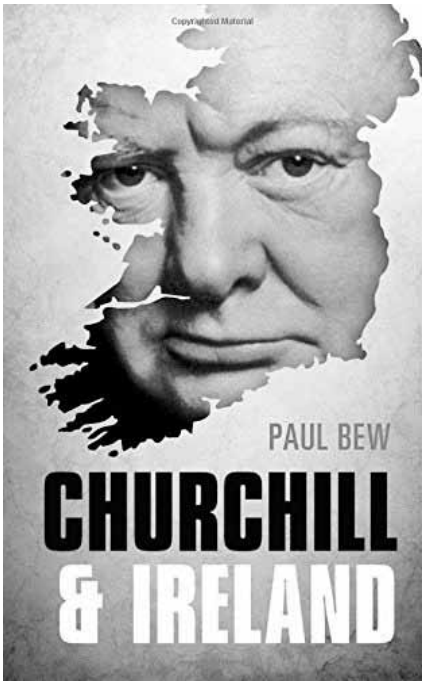
The author is not afraid of making controversial or counterfactual claims. In the event of a German victory in a war where Britain had remained neutral, Marlor claims that 'An un-weakened Britain would have been well off in comparison' (pp. 88, 209). Just what the Kaiser's Europe would have looked like or what Britain's relationship with a German-dominated continent would have been is unclear. But few in 1914 relished such a prospect. More speculation occurs with parallels being drawn between British intervention in 1914 and the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. While tenuous similarities may be found between the expectations created through the Triple Entente before the First World War and Britain's recent relationship with the USA, there is enough interesting and original material in the study for superfluous claims to be avoided. Another moot point concerns whether or not Ponsonby was a pacifist (p. 158). Marlor claims that he was not for peace at any price. But as a neutralist in 1914, an advocate of Britain's unilateral disarmament, active participant in the 'no more war' movement, founder of the Peace Pledge Union and chairman of War Resisters International, Ponsonby consistently displayed pacifist traits.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of British intervention or the practicalities of remaining aloof in 1914, a number of anti-war MPs found themselves castigated for their principled stance. Derided as a 'peace crank', Ponsonby was not the only Liberal MP de-selected by his constituency. During the war he was twice attacked and Trevelyan was condemned to be shot! Marlor shows that there was nothing easy about what Ponsonby and his fellow neutralists championed. Despite the unpopularity of their approach, they, along with some elements of the liberal press, provided a largely forgotten alternative reading to the grim days of July and August 1914. This is the chief value of Marlor's informative study.

Dr Chris Cooper teaches History and Politics at St Anselm's College, Birkenhead. He has published a number of journal articles covering different themes of modern British political history.

Churchill's attitude to Ireland

Paul Bew, *Churchill and Ireland* (Oxford University Press, 2016)
Review by **Dr Iain Sharpe**



Given the sheer range and number of thematic studies of aspects of Winston Churchill's career that have been published in recent years, it is surprising that his relationship with Ireland and the Irish has not had more attention. While Churchill's name is not bound up with Irish affairs in the way that Gladstone's is, nonetheless he and Ireland played significant roles in one another's histories. With the exception of his final premiership, each of his periods in office coincided with defining moments in the relationship between Britain and Ireland – from the crisis over the third home rule bill before the First World War to the controversy over Irish neutrality in the Second.

So it is welcome that a historian should decide to tackle this subject, and even more so that it should be Paul Bew. A crossbench peer, Bew has already made a distinguished contribution to the study of Irish history through his many publications. He has also been an adviser to the Bloody Sunday Commission and to David Trimble during the peace process negotiations. Perhaps these varied roles and his own apparent political sympathies (at once left-wing and unionist) make him better placed than most to bring out the nuances and paradoxes of Churchill's engagement with Irish affairs. Certainly this is neither hagiography nor hatchet job.

There have been two essential criticisms of Churchill's attitude towards Ireland – either that he was an opportunist who took whatever view best suited his career at the time or that he was a diehard imperialist opponent of the Irish nation – as witnessed respectively by his conversion to the home rule cause after switching loyalties from the Conservatives to the Liberals in 1904 and his later hostility to Irish republicanism. Bew argues, by contrast, that there was an essential consistency in Churchill's thinking and actions on Irish policy, one that combined genuine sympathy for Irish self-government with a belief that this must be within the framework of the United Kingdom and the British Empire.

He supported Irish home rule before the First World War because he was convinced that gaining Irish goodwill through a concession of self-government would make Britain stronger by making Ireland a contented member of the English-speaking world. At the same time, he was opposed to coercing Ulster into a home rule Ireland, and one of the first members of Asquith's cabinet to argue in favour of special treatment for the predominantly protestant counties in the north of Ireland. In the aftermath of the Easter Rising of 1916, Churchill, by now out of office, encouraged the ultimately unsuccessful attempts to achieve agreement home rule settlement between Redmond and Carson, the leaders of Irish nationalism and unionism.

Yet as war secretary in Lloyd George's coalition government from 1919, Churchill was a hawk in the cabinet, during the war of independence, proposing in 1920 the creation of the Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary (Auxies) who became notorious for their use of reprisals against the Irish

A Liberal Democrat History Group evening meeting

The Leadership of Charles Kennedy

Under Charles Kennedy's leadership, from 1999 to 2006, the Liberal Democrats won a record number of seats in the Commons – but in January 2006 he was forced to resign by the party's MPs. When he died, in June 2015, he was mourned deeply by the party he once led. This meeting will assess Kennedy's achievements as Liberal Democrat leader and his strengths and weaknesses.

Speakers: **Greg Hurst** (author, *Charles Kennedy: A Tragic Flaw*) and **Lord Dick Newby** (fomer Chief of Staff to Charles Kennedy). Chair: **Baroness Lindsay Northover**.

6.30pm, Monday 3 July 2017
Lady Violet Room, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE

civilian population in response to IRA killings. Even then there was an element of pragmatism behind the policy – Churchill hoped that the impact of reprisals would be severe enough to bring Sinn Fein to the negotiating table. He supported 'back channel' discussions to make this happen, making it clear that a positive offer of self-government would be made if violence ended. He was equally adamant, however, that this would not be an Irish republic. After the conclusion of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, Churchill defended the government's approach against Asquith's criticism that it betrayed traditional Liberal commitment to justice for Ireland, pointing out that:

> For the best part of five years, Mr Gladstone pursued a regime of coercion in Ireland and it was only at the end of that period that he turned round and offered a home rule solution to the men he had previously described as marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the empire.

Once the treaty was signed, Churchill showed a fierce determination to make sure it succeeded, giving strong support to Michael Collins and the pro-treaty forces in southern Ireland and to Sir James Craig and the Northern Ireland government, overlooking minor breaches of the treaty in order to achieve its overall success. As chancellor of the exchequer in Baldwin's Conservative government in 1925 Churchill agreed a relatively generous financial settlement for Ireland, to sugar the pill of the boundary commission's failure to lead to progress towards a united Ireland. The resulting intergovernmental agreement appeared to offer a future for Ireland in line with Churchill's wishes – all of Ireland had some form of self-government within the British Empire, the Dublin government accepted the legitimacy of Northern Ireland, and the way appeared open for friendly cooperation between the two parts of the island, with the possibility of unity being achieved at some point in the future by consent rather than coercion.

This was not to last. De Valera's new Irish constitution of 1937 withdrew Dublin's recognition of Northern Ireland, with Articles 2 and 3 effectively making a territorial claim on the six counties. Churchill was further dismayed by Neville Chamberlain's agreement on the eve of the Second World War to give up the so-called treaty ports in the Irish Free State, the loss of which was to harm Britain during the second world war. During the war Churchill was angered by Irish neutrality and willing to concede a united Ireland in exchange for Irish Free State participation in the war on the Allies' side, but there was little appetite from De Valera or the population of the Free State for such an agreement. In 1948 Costello's coalition government in Ireland severed the last link between southern Ireland and Britain by declaring a republic. This completed the defeat of Churchill's vision of the relationship between the two islands. Speaking in parliament he said:

> I may cherish the hope that some day all Ireland will be loyal, will be loyal because it is free, will be united because it is loyal and will be united within itself and united to the British Empire.

He added wistfully: 'Strange as it may seem, I still cherish that dream'. Such a comment might just as easily have dated from Churchill's period as a member of a home rule cabinet before the First World War, and supports Bew's argument, which overall I find persuasive. Of course it is possible to identify moments of opportunism and contradiction in the course of Churchill's long involvement with Irish affairs, but for the most part this was in pursuit of an overriding aim. This short and engaging book therefore makes an important contribution to Churchill (and Irish) studies.

Dr Iain Sharpe is an administrator at the University of London International Academy and a Liberal Democrat councillor in Watford.